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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF JUNIOR ENLISTED MARINE CORPS VETERANS' CAREER TRANSITION AND ORGANIZATIONAL ATTACHMENT: FROM THE MILITARY TO CIVILIAN WORK ENVIRONMENT

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A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF JUNIOR ENLISTED MARINE CORPS
VETERANS' CAREER TRANSITION AND ORGANIZATIONAL ATTACHMENT:
FROM THE MILITARY TO CIVILIAN WORK ENVIRONMENT

by

KEVIN SANFORD

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Human Resource Development

Jerry Gilley, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Soules College of Business

The University of Texas at Tyler
April 2018

The University of Texas at Tyler
Tyler, Texas

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April 13, 2018
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to all the past, present, and future military veterans. It is especially dedicated to my military veteran family members that have positively contributed to making me the man I am today: my grandfather, WWII Army veteran J.B. Lee; my uncle, Marine Corps veteran Melvin E. Lee, Sr.; my uncle, Army veteran Harold A. Lee; my cousin, Marine Corps veteran Melvin E. Lee, Jr.; and my favorite veteran and fellow U.S. Marine, SSgt Jeff Archibald. I also want to thank each of my Marine Corps brothers that participated in this research to provide insight and assistance for our sisters and brothers-in-arms. As a fellow Marine veteran currently working in the civilian world, we share a special connection and a heightened sense of camaraderie. Your candor was invaluable to this study, and your ideas and insights will hopefully provide some understanding and awareness to the world we, as veterans, live in. This study is a tribute to our brotherhood.

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Abstract

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF JUNIOR ENLISTED MARINE CORPS VETERANS' CAREER TRANSITION AND ORGANIZATIONAL ATTACHMENT: FROM THE MILITARY TO CIVILIAN WORK ENVIRONMENT

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The University of Texas at Tyler

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Military service is a transformative experience that leaves an indelible mark on all who serve. Once separated from the military way of life, many veterans find that they yearn for the structure, camaraderie, and discipline they experienced while in the military. These feelings of attachment to the military can make the transition back to civilian life difficult and pose a barrier to success in a civilian workplace. As military service members separate from their military service obligation and transition to the civilian workforce, they experience numerous challenges leaving behind the culture of the military and adapting to the civilian way of life.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they address their feelings of attachment and transition out of the military and into the civilian workforce. The term *junior enlisted* commonly refers to Marines that hold the rank of E-1 through E-3; however, for the purpose of this study, it

refers to military members (rank E-5 and below) that served one to two active duty enlistment terms (four to eight years). This study focused on the veterans' feelings of attachment to the military way of life as they transitioned to the civilian workforce and how these feelings of attachment impact veterans' behaviors during the transition period.

This research was based on two theoretical foundations found in the literature, *Attachment Theory* and *Transition Theory*, as they impact veterans *transitioning out of the military* and *into the civilian workforce*. Qualitative interviews with former military service members were conducted to collect data and information on their individual personal experiences.

This study explains the intersection of veterans' struggles with both transition and feelings of attachment to the military lifestyle so that the military, veterans, and civilian employers can develop strategies to ease the transitions of the current generation of warriors back to civilian life and foster success in the workplace.

Chapter One

Introduction

Background to the Problem

The inception of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) as a response to the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States has fundamentally transformed the United States military and created a substantial new generation of veterans. The U.S. Census Bureau (2011) reports that there are approximately 22 million veterans in the United States, and 1.6 million of those served directly or indirectly in operations that began in 2001. The majority of veterans that served in the post-9/11 period were predominantly in support of combat operations: Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) (Prosek & Holm, 2014). With almost seventeen years of sustained military operations around the world, the GWOT is now the United States' longest war. In the wake of this war, Wolfe (2012) observed that approximately 200,000 service members transition out of the military each year. As a result of the growing number of service members that have separated from active military service, veterans make up approximately 10% of the total U.S. population over the age of 17 years (Garvey-Wilson, Messer, & Hoge, 2009).

As military service members separate from their military service obligation and transition to the civilian workforce, they experience numerous challenges leaving behind the culture of the military and adapting to the civilian way of life (Dexter, 2016; Minnis, 2014). High unemployment and poor economic conditions may prevent veterans from

seeking jobs congruent with their previous skills and experiences; thus, many are forced to take low wage, entry-level positions (Sargent, 2014). In many cases, military veterans experience separation anxiety and feelings of attachment toward their former military culture, which may lead to depression and a sense of inadequacy (Brignone et al., 2017). Civilian employers may intensify these feelings, as they often do not provide the same level of engagement or performance expectations experienced in the military (Dexter, 2016; Stone, 2016). As a result of personal challenges and perceived deficiencies in the civilian workplace, these veterans, who were once accustomed to greater responsibilities, duties, and obligations, are now struggling to transition to the civilian workforce (Stone, 2016). This phenomenological study explores the intersection of veterans' struggles with both transition and feelings of attachment to the military lifestyle so that the military, veterans, and civilian employers can develop strategies to ease the transition of the current generation of warriors back to civilian life and foster success in the workplace.

Statement of the Problem

Military service is a transformative experience that leaves an indelible mark on all who serve. Once separated from the military way of life, many veterans find that they yearn for the structure, camaraderie, and discipline they experienced while in the military. These feelings of attachment to the military can make the transition back to civilian life difficult and pose a barrier to success in a civilian workplace.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they address feelings of attachment and transition out of the military to the civilian workforce. The term *junior enlisted* commonly refers to Marines that hold

the rank of E-1 through E-3; however, for the purpose of this study, it refers to military members (rank E-5 and below) that served one to two active duty enlistment terms (four to eight years). This subset of veterans was chosen because a vast majority of veterans entering the civilian workforce are junior enlisted (Pyle, Haddock, Poston, Bray, & Williams, 2007) who served approximately four to eight years or the equivalent of one to two terms of enlistment (Martorell, Miller, Daugherty, & Borgschulte, 2014). This study focused on the veterans' feelings of attachment to the military way of life as they transitioned to the civilian workforce and how these feelings of attachment impacted veterans' behaviors during the transition period. This study explored why veterans expect the culture of the military to be replicated in the civilian workforce. Additionally, it posited how veterans' expectations produced conflict between veterans and civilian employers related to their performance in the civilian workplace. Practical suggestions for overcoming these issues are discussed in the context of the individual veteran, civilian employers, and the military.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study was based on two theoretical foundations found in the literature, *Attachment Theory* (Bretherton, 1992) and *Transition Theory* (Schlossberg, 1981), as they impacted veterans transitioning out of the military and transitioning into the civilian workforce (see Figure 1). By reviewing research on these theories, this study described the uncertainties and misconceptions about the effects of Attachment Theory and Transition Theory on veterans transitioning out of the military into the civilian workforce. This study added to the existing literature by applying Attachment Theory in a human resource development context, exploring the connections between Attachment Theory

and Transition Theory, and examining Attachment Theory and Transition Theory as they apply to military veterans.

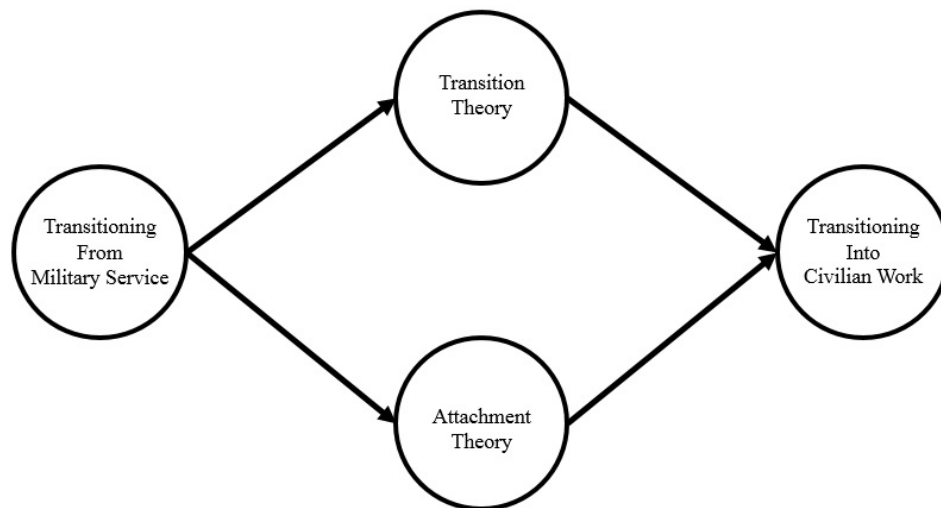


Figure 1. Four major domains of this research

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQ) guided this study:

- RQ 1) What are the experiences of veterans (Marine Corps junior enlisted) as they transition to civilian employment?
- RQ 2) How do veterans experience perceived attachment to their former military careers?
- RQ 3) How does the attachment to their former military careers affect veterans' transition to the civilian workforce?
- RQ 4) How do veterans feel about the level of difficulty required to adapt to the civilian workforce?
- RQ 5) How can employers assist veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce?

Overview of the Design of the Study

Qualitative interviews with former military service members were performed to collect data and information on their individual personal experiences. Interviews were

conducted until the point of saturation was reached. At the point of saturation, the researcher stopped gathering data, because any additional data collected would not reveal new information (Charmaz, 2014). The interviews conducted used a series of predetermined questions designed to address issues of transition out of the military, attachment to the military, transition to the civilian workforce, and assistance employers and organizations could provide veterans who struggle with attachment to promote their success.

Significance of the Study

Transition. Once military members have completed their obligated duties, they are no longer on active military service. The former military members, freed from the obligation to obey direct and lawful orders and conform to the rigidly structured military environment, are now in the position to take charge of their own lives. This transition is often met with uncertainty and a lack of clarity on the direction of their lives outside the military (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). The anxiety and frustration that veterans often face are the results of a lack of preparation for or expectation of the pending changes that are associated with separation. Upon separation, there is a long and difficult period of adjustment (Gilley, 1985). Veterans unexpectedly find themselves in situations where they no longer receive the same level of attention or care in physical conditions (clothes, housing, food) or daily structure (clear directives and schedule) that was previously provided to them (Minnis, 2014).

The transition phase out of the military can be difficult. The actual process of leaving the military is a challenging and complex experience for each veteran. The traditional veteran needs assistance in a variety of different areas (Prudential, 2012).

Each branch of the military provides some form of required training prior to separating from the military (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Each branch of the military mandates a series of classes as part of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). Topics such as available transition services, expected process hints, and any necessary interventions are covered during separation classes. For those veterans who served in combat areas and may have mental issues or physical injuries, access to medical treatment and other assistance is provided. The training may also include different forms of counseling, assistance, and job search techniques. While it may be useful, the training is focused on immediate separation tasks and the initial job search and is not geared toward long-term requirements for sustainable employment in the civilian workforce (Anderson & Goodman, 2014).

Many organizations fail to recognize or understand the problem with a traumatic transition experience for their employees (Gilley, 1985). These veterans, in most cases, will find the transition from the structured, military atmosphere to a new and unfamiliar civilian environment difficult to navigate (Kline et al., 2010). Therefore, this study acknowledged that some of the difficulty in the transition process is due to the lack of understanding or acknowledgment that veterans may experience attachment to the atmosphere of their former employer, the military.

As military members go through the employment transition process, there is a period of adjustment that many find challenging. The transition that veterans experience forces them to interact with new types of people and may influence their own self-perception. For those who do not adequately adjust, there are periods of remorse, withdrawal, and negative self-reflection. During this transition period, members

experiencing attachment may become depressed and anxious (Gilley, 1985). For some, it is difficult to escape the environment of the military, where they are accustomed to putting the military's needs before their own (Dillon, 2007). However, the process of overcoming these challenges can contribute to a strong skillset for future transitions (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012). The concept of addressing change is stated in Schlossberg's (1981) theory of transition and adaptation. Schlossberg's Transition Theory has been used in previous research on veterans (Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza-Mitchell, 2009; DiRamio & Spires, 2009) and has been shown to present an effective way in which to understand their experience of change.

Attachment. After decades of research, the reformulation of Attachment Theory was published in 1969 by Bowlby and later contributed to by Ainsworth (Bretherton, 1992). Originally, Attachment Theory drew on ethology, cybernetics, developmental psychology, and other areas that changed the scientific view on a child's tie to the mother and its disruption through separation, deprivation, and bereavement (Bowlby, 1958). Ainsworth contributed to Bowlby's research by adding an exploration of the mother's maternal instincts and sensitive awareness to the needs of a baby (Bowlby, 1973). The attachment relationships between adults began to gain notice in the early 1970s with studies of adult bereavement and marital separation (Bretherton, 1992). Attachment Theory research revealed the development of emotional bonds and trust between adults and those that they have determined to be important in life such as family, friends, and relationship partners (Ainsworth, 1989; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Mazaheri, 2000). As more time passed, other research also contributed to the theory and how it relates to humans and work (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). Researchers noted the way adults would

often describe themselves in different employment situations: feeling safe, secure, avoidant, ambivalent, and other terms normally associated with the attachment paradigm (Bretherton, 1992). Attachment Theory has been regarded as one of the top theories in personality research; however, it is often ignored within the field of organizational psychology (Harms, 2011). Previous research had identified adverse outcomes of job insecurity, including decreased job satisfaction and affective commitment (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002). Crucial affective reactions to job insecurity, lowered job satisfaction, and affective commitment can be harmful and costly for both the individual and the organization (Sverke et al., 2002). Research has also noted positive impacts of attachment in organizations. When individuals become attached, they tend to be more trusting of those in charge (Jiang, 2017). When individuals are attached to their organization, it creates a feeling of unity with fewer concerns about negative issues, such as concern for employment. Organizational members who experience feelings of attachment tend to seek emotional support and view the organization as a fair establishment (Jiang, 2017).

A certain level of social engagement takes place within organizations with members that often bond through personal friendships, professional relationships, and social connections, which provide an internal system for networking to build relationships and social capital based on reputation and shared experiences (Arthur, Claman, & DeFillippi, 1995). Employees take part in this as a way of building relationships that may benefit them and their careers (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). When someone departs an organization, the networking that was established is often lost (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). Some members want to continue to serve their organization

in some capacity (Gilley, 1985). Many people find self-worth and status in their established careers, as they feel their purpose, status, and value are directly connected to their organization and position (Parker, 2002).

This study examined and addressed the current veteran population and their feelings of attachment to the military as they directly and indirectly impact veterans' performance and expectations during the transition to civilian employment. Studies have examined Transition Theory as it applies to military veterans, and the services made available for veterans are acknowledged in some of the literature; however, minimal research addresses the potential complications and effects associated with the veteran's attachment to the military environment. The gap in this body of literature exists in the area of veterans transitioning out of the military and into civilian employment while still attempting to manage the feelings of attachment that may impact their pursuit of and successful integration into civilian employment.

Assumptions and Limitations

An assumption is a thing that can be considered to be true; however, it cannot be verified (Terrell, 2016, p. 41). This study assumed that the participants would be able and willing to describe to the researcher their experiences of the transition out of the military to the civilian workforce. The study also assumed that the participants would be able to describe their feelings to determine possible areas of attachment to the military. An additional assumption was that the participants' experiences would fit or could be addressed within the definitions of Transition Theory and Attachment Theory.

Limitations are constraints outside of the control of the researcher and inherent to the actual study that could affect the generalizability of the results (Terrell, 2016, p.42).

Some of the limitations of this study were sample size, the limited number of participants available that fulfilled the criteria of junior enlisted Marines that served on active duty for four to eight years (Creswell, 2013). The participants were solicited via a veteran's research screening questionnaire. This was distributed to a network of former service members. The target participants were chosen from a list of former military colleagues and associates of the researcher. Recruiting reflected purposive sampling, with the intention of recruiting a variety of combat and non-combat veterans to explore the experiences of attachment and transition of Marine Corps veterans. The candidates that were selected had common military rank and time in service and had served in the Marine Corps. Homogeneous and criterion sampling are essential to a phenomenological study; therefore, a small population was selected, and this decreased the generalizability of the data and conclusions (Creswell, 1998). Personal opinion is always prone to bias, which may reduce the validity of any data obtained or interpreted. Since qualitative studies use different aspects of data, the findings of this study were subject to interpretation by the researcher (Morse & Richards, 2002). Participants were volunteers and may have elected to participate because of their experience with the phenomenon of the study; therefore, it may have decreased the generalizability of the findings. Also, the researcher is a former enlisted, Marine Corps veteran with social and professional connections to some of the study's participants from which interview participants were recruited. This may lead to an inherent bias derived from the researcher's own background (Creswell, 2013). Further limitations included lack of substantial literature on Attachment Theory in the context of veterans.

Definitions

According to Title 38 U.S.C. § 101, a military veteran is defined as “a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable” (Stone & Stone, 2015). A veteran can also be defined as anyone who served on active duty in any job capacity while a member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Reserves, or National Guard and was not discharged dishonorably (Harrell & Berglass, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the terms *military veteran*, *former military*, *former service member*, and *veteran* were used interchangeably.

Terms relevant for this study:

- *Active Duty* – full-time service in the military or armed forces
- *Armed Forces or Armed Services* – the five military service branches: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy
- *American Legion* – wartime veterans service organization aimed at advocating patriotism across the U.S. through diverse programs and member benefits.
- *Attachment Theory* – a set of concepts that explain the emergence of emotional bonds and the way these bonds affect behaviors and emotions in different areas of life; includes attachment and emotional bonds in adult relationships, friendships, and romantic relationships
- *Blue Falcon* – a negative slang term used to describe supposed comrades whose actions harm their friends, often for their own benefit
- *Camaraderie* – a sense of trust, loyalty, and goodwill that has developed among people who have known each other for a significant period of time

- *Chain of command* – the hierarchical command structure within military organizations; outlines the reporting structure of service members
- *Civilian workforce* – civilian employment; non-military employees
- *Commanding officer* – usually a commissioned officer having authority and power over the military unit and personnel, within the bounds of military law
- *Combat* – refers to military personnel or resources engaged in conflict (commonly referred to as: battle, fighting, action, hostilities, conflict, war, or warfare)
- *Combat Marine Corps veteran* – a Marine who had deployed into a combat zone during his or her enlistment
- *Commissioned Officer* – appointed military leadership members that are the most senior military management personnel; ranks of O-1 through O-10 (see Figure 3)
- *Cybernetics* – a descriptive and explanatory framework for understanding attachment and interpersonal relationships between human beings
- *Department of Defense (DOD)* – the civilian lead governmental organization that is headed by the Secretary of Defense which manages and provides overall direction to all branches of the United States Armed Forces
- *Department of the Army* – the military organization headed by the Secretary of the Army
- *Department of the Navy* – the military organization headed by the Secretary of the Navy; made up of the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps
- *Deployment* – military service members moved or stationed to a specified area; usually duty, combat, training, or assignment abroad for a specific length of time

- *End of Active Service (EAS)* – the termination or separation date of a service member’s active duty enlistment
- *End of Obligated Service (EOS)* – the termination or separation date of all required enlisted service, fulfilling all obligation of active duty and reserve time
- *Enlisted* – a member of the armed forces who is below the rank of officer; ranks E-1 through E-9 (see Figure 2)
- *Ethology* – the study of human behavior, social organization, attachment and understanding interpersonal relationships between human beings
- *Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)* – a military campaign after the attacks on September 11, 2001; refers to non-specific combat or deployment campaigns post-9/11
- *Human Resource Development (HRD)* – is the framework for helping employees develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and abilities
- *Junior Enlisted* – enlisted military person who commonly holds the rank of E-1 through E-3; however, for the purpose of this study, may refer to military members (rank E-5 and below) that served one to two active duty enlistment terms (four to eight years) (see Figure 2)
- *MOS* – Military Occupational Specialty; assigned military job
- *Non-combat Marine Corps veteran* – a Marine who had not deployed into a combat zone during his or her enlistment
- *Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO)* – enlisted military person who has attained the leadership ranks of E-4 through E-5 (see Figure 2)
- *OEF* – Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan), October 7, 2001–present

- *Officer* – leadership career path in the military; usually refers to a commissioned officer
- *OIF* – Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq), March 20, 2003–August 31, 2010
- *OND* – Operation New Dawn (Iraq), September 1, 2010–December 15, 2011
- *Phenomenological, Hermeneutic* – the interpretation of the lived experience (verbal and non-verbal) as it relates to human experience
- *Phenomenology* – the study of a person’s subjective "lived experience" of a phenomenon
- *Post-9/11* – a period of time after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks
- *PTS* – Post-Traumatic Stress; common temporary response to an experience of any traumatic or stressful event (e.g., car accidents, military combat)
- *PTSD* – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder; long-term, severe response to an experience of a traumatic or stressful event (i.e., a mental health diagnosis)
- *Reserves* – members of the military reserve forces (“reservists”); usually work a civilian job, but can be called to full-time, active military duty
- *Staff Non-Commissioned Officer (SNCO)* – senior enlisted military person; designated as a military leader; holds the ranks of E-6 through E-9 (see Figure 2)
- *Transition Assistance Program (TAP)* – required military separation classes
- *Transition Theory* – a theory developed by Schlossberg (1981) that explored an individual’s ability to deal with any event, or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles
- *United States Marine Corps (USMC)* – smallest branch of the United States Armed Forces; Department of the Navy, traditionally the first to go into battle

- *Veteran* – a former member of the military who served on active duty in any job capacity in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Reserves, or National Guard and was not discharged dishonorably
- *Veterans Administration (VA)* – an organization that provides patient care, veterans' benefits, and other services to veterans of the U.S. armed forces and their families
- *Veterans of Foreign War (VFW)* – wartime veterans' service organization aimed at advocating patriotism across the U.S. through diverse programs and member benefits.
- *Warrant Officer (WO)* – appointed military leadership members that are technical experts, usually prior enlisted personnel; ranks of WO-1 through CWO-5 (see Figure 4)












Marine Corps Rank - Enlisted (E-1 through E-9)				
Insignia	Pay Grade	Rank	Abbreviation	Classification
No Insignia	E-1	Private	PVT	Junior Enlisted
	E-2	Private First Class	PFC	Junior Enlisted
	E-3	Lance Corporal	LCPL	Junior Enlisted
	E-4	Corporal	CPL	NCO
	E-5	Sergeant	SGT	NCO
	E-6	Staff Sergeant	SSGT	SNCO
	E-7	Gunnery Sergeant	GYSGT	SNCO
	E-8	Master Sergeant	MSGT	SNCO
	E-8	First Sergeant	1STSGT	SNCO
	E-9	Master Gunnery Sergeant	MGYSGT	SNCO
	E-9	Sergeant Major	SGTMAJ	SNCO
	E-9	Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps	SGTMAJMC	SNCO

Figure 2. United States Marine Corps rank structure - enlisted











Marine Corps Rank - Commissioned Officers (O-1 through O-10)				
Insignia	Pay Grade	Rank	Abbreviation	Classification
	O-1	Second Lieutenant	2NDLT	Officer
	O-2	First Lieutenant	1STLT	Officer
	O-3	Captain	CAPT	Officer
	O-4	Major	MAJ	Field Officer
	O-5	Lieutenant Colonel	LTCOL	Field Officer
	O-6	Colonel	COL	Field Officer
	O-7	Brigadier General	BGEN	General Officer
	O-8	Major General	MGEN	General Officer
	O-9	Lieutenant General	LGEN	General Officer
	O-10	General	GEN	General Officer

Figure 3. United States Marine Corps rank structure - commissioned officer






Marine Corps Rank - Warrant Officer (WO-1 through CWO-5)				
Insignia	Pay Grade	Rank	Abbreviation	Classification
	WO-1	Warrant Officer	WO1	Warrant Officer
	CWO-2	Chief Warrant Officer Two	CWO2	Warrant Officer
	CWO-3	Chief Warrant Officer Three	CWO3	Warrant Officer
	CWO-4	Chief Warrant Officer Four	CWO4	Warrant Officer
	CWO-5	Chief Warrant Officer Five	CWO5	Warrant Officer

Figure 4. United States Marine Corps rank structure - warrant officer

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter one of this study provided the background of the problem, the statement of problem, and outlined the purpose of this study. It further addressed the theoretical foundations of the study, outlined the research questions considered in the study, discussed the design and significance of the study, provided definitions of terms relevant to the study, and the overall organization of the dissertation. Chapter two provides a review of the relevant literature and focuses on proposed theoretical foundations in support of this study. Chapter three outlines the methodology, design, research questions, and procedures for data collection and analysis. Chapter four provides a complete examination of the data collection, data analysis procedures, and aggregated themes to address and answer the research questions for this study. Chapter five, the final chapter, provides a summary of the overall study, data, and results. It also elaborates on the conclusions drawn from the research, the limitations, the implications, and recommendations for future research areas and opportunities.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter started with the size of the veteran population and the background to the problem. As military service members separate from their military service obligation, there are several types of feelings that must be addressed, including attachment and abandonment, as they face the transition into the civilian workforce. The statement of the problem addressed veterans' feelings of attachment to the military and how those feelings can make the transition back to civilian life difficult and create barriers to success in a civilian workplace. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they address feelings of attachment and transition out

of the military to the civilian workforce. Relevant theories that underpinned this study were outlined based on two theoretical foundations found in the literature, *Attachment Theory* and *Transition Theory*, as they impact veterans transitioning out of the military into the civilian workforce. The research questions that guided this study were previewed, along with an overview of the design of the study. The significance of this study outlined the definition and history of Transition Theory and Attachment Theory and linked the theories to this study. A list of definitions was provided to assist the reader with clarification and understanding terms and jargon used during this study. An overview of the organization of the dissertation was provided followed by a summary of the chapter.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the relevant literature and focuses on proposed theoretical foundations, including areas of Transition Theory and Attachment Theory. These theories will form a foundation for analysis of the veteran population. The initial section, transitioning out of military service, explains aspects of the population represented in this study. The next section examines literature about Attachment Theory, and the final section examines different components of Transition Theory.

By reviewing research on transitioning out of military service, Attachment Theory, and Transition Theory, this study established itself at the nexus of the three concepts and broadened the application of Attachment Theory and Transition Theory by utilizing them to elucidate the experiences of veterans transitioning out of the military. This study added to the literature by examining the intersection between Attachment Theory and Transition Theory as an explanatory factor for individual veterans' experiences as they attempt to transition to civilian employment. This chapter addresses the current gap in literature regarding these theories.

Literature Search

A comprehensive online search was conducted using databases accessed through Google Scholar and The University of Texas at Tyler Library. Databases and search tools

used for locating relevant material included, yet were not limited to: Academic Search Complete, Business Abstracts with Full Text, Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost Databases, ECO, Emerald, Family Studies Abstracts, Health and Psychosocial Instruments, Humanities Full Text, Journals by Title, JSTOR, LexisNexis Academic, Literature Resource Center, Military & Government Collection, OvidSP, ProQuest, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, PsycINFO, Research Methods, SAGE Journals, Scholar Works, Small Business Reference Center, SpringerLink, Vocational & Career Center, and Wiley Online Library. Various combinations of keywords were employed to search for relevant material including: *military veteran, Transition Theory, Attachment Theory, veteran transition, veteran statistics, veteran unemployment, veteran employability, wounded warriors, assisting veterans, transition to civilian employment, employing veterans, disabled veterans, military training, career planning, and veteran separation*. Additional studies and resources were discovered by accessing literature used in other scholarly writings. The primary focus was on current literature within a five-year window.

Transitioning Out of the Military

The transition phase out of the military can be difficult. The actual process of separating from the military is a challenging and complex experience for each veteran. The traditional veteran needs assistance in a variety of different areas, such as finding employment, medical issues, and learning to adapt to different social and cultural environments (Prudential, 2012). Each of the different branches of the military provides some form of required training prior to separating from the military (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Each of the military branches are identified in this chapter.

History and structure of the armed forces. Under the Department of Defense, the United States armed forces is made up of five military branches: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy. Each branch is made up of an active component and a reserve component. The active duty members provide full-time support while the reserves are available for part-time support and mobilization as needed. During times of conflict, the active branches can utilize the resources of their reserve counterparts (Powers, 2017).

The Army is the largest branch and primary ground-force (Powers, 2017; Wood, 2017). It was established June 14, 1775, with a current estimated active duty population of 471,000 (approximately 18% officers and 82% enlisted). Approximately 87% of the Army's active duty members are male (see Figure 2) (Powers, 2017).

The Air Force is the newest of the military branches and is predominantly focused on aerial combat (Powers, 2017; Wood, 2017). Established September 18, 1947, the Air Force has an estimated active duty population of 322,000, of which approximately 82% are male (see Figure 5). Officers make up about 19% of the Air Force active duty members (Powers, 2017).

The Coast Guard was formerly under the Department of Transportation; however, it was transferred to the Department of Homeland Security in 2002 (Powers, 2017). The Coast Guard was established on August 4, 1790 and currently has about 36,000 active duty members. Approximately 23% are officers and about 84% of active duty members are male (see Figure 5) (Powers, 2017).

The Marine Corps falls under the Department of the Navy and is normally the first branch to be deployed during combat operations (Powers, 2017; Wood, 2017).

Established November 10, 1775, the Marine Corps has an estimated active duty population of 184,000 members comprised of approximately 11% officers and 89% enlisted members. The Marine Corps has an approximate active duty male population of 93% (see Figure 5) (Powers, 2017).

The Navy is primarily responsible for areas at sea during times of conflict (Powers, 2017; Wood, 2017). The Navy also serves as the primary source of transportation and support for the Marine Corps. Established October 13, 1775, there are an estimated 324,000 active duty members in the Navy. Approximately 17% of the members are officers and about 85% are male (see Figure 5) (Powers, 2017).

The military officer's main duty is to provide leadership and close supervision in areas of management and control. Depending on the branch, there are ten or eleven officer ranks. Military officers are the analog to management and leaders in the civilian workforce. The enlisted members of the branches are specialists in their fields, and they are trained to perform duties that often require manual labor and combat proficiency. Each branch consists of nine enlisted ranks (Powers, 2017; Wood, 2017). As service members progress up the enlisted ranks, higher positions have increased levels of responsibility and involve greater levels of supervision. Enlisted military members are the analog to workers that can perform specialized tasks in the civilian workforce (Powers, 2017).

U.S. Military 101 - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines

Branch	Active Duty	Enlisted	Officer	Male	Female
Army	471,000	82%	18%	87%	13%
Air Force	322,000	81%	19%	82%	18%
Coast Guard	36,000	77%	23%	84%	16%
Marine Corps	184,000	89%	11%	93%	7%
Navy	324,000	83%	17%	85%	15%
Total Active	1,337,000				

Figure 5. U. S. Military 101 - modified from Powers (2017).

Military separation and veteran culture. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011), there are approximately 22 million veterans in the United States and 1.6 million veterans who directly and indirectly served in the Gulf War operations that began in 2001. The majority of veterans that served during post-9/11 were predominantly in support of combat operations: Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) (Prosek & Holm, 2014). Additionally, approximately 200,000 military members will transition out of the military each year (Wolfe, 2012). As a result of the growing number of service members that have separated from the military, veterans make up approximately 10% of the total U.S. population over the age of 17 years (Garvey-Wilson, Messer, & Hoge, 2009).

There are a variety of reasons that draw people to join the military, including a sense of honor, obligation of duty, response to September 11, military history in the family, act of patriotism, promise of educational benefits, support for family, or the thrill of a challenge (Ackerman et al., 2009). Despite these disparate reasons for joining, the act of separation is a common experience for all veterans, and post-military life is

characterized by a common type of culture that is often associated with former service members. Veterans' experiences tend to shape their personality as well as dictate the way they will act or react in a given situation (Ackerman et al., 2009). This group of individuals commonly has a subculture based on similar lifestyles, language, clothes, and certain behavioral actions that cause them to be distinct from non-veteran civilians (Dunlop, 1999). In addition to these easily-identifiable characteristics, there is often an expectation on how they will be approached and engaged (Ackerman et al., 2009). While an increasing amount of services and opportunities are being offered for veterans, there is still a degree of social distance from other non-veteran civilians that can impact veterans' experiences after leaving the military (Hayden & Buzzetta, 2014; Minnis & Stern, 2016).

Employment. The life changing events and real-life experiences of those who have been in the military makes those who serve a unique subset within the population (Ackerman et al., 2009). As a result of troop downsizing and the end of combat operations from foreign deployment, there has been an increased number of veterans separating and reintegrating into civilian areas (Ackerman et al., 2009). The economy has failed to provide veterans with equitable employment opportunities compared to their civilian counterparts (Minnis, 2014). The lack of adequate employment opportunities has been particularly challenging for those who have not had previous experience beyond the jobs performed while in the military (Minnis, 2014).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017) reported that the veteran unemployment rate has dropped. However, looking at a specific time frame, the civilian counterparts show lower levels of unemployment (Minnis, 2014). The unemployment rate of young military veterans (18 – 24 years old) is disproportionately high; however, these types of

statistical totals may not accurately describe the overall employment picture of veterans (Loughran, 2014). A number of other factors could affect the results of the employment status of veterans and may prevent employment, such as education, training, or medical issues (Loughran, 2014; Osborne, 2014).

Another challenge that veterans experience is related to their job tasks. The jobs that the veterans performed in the military are titled MOSs (Military Occupational Specialties) and are only sometimes transferable to civilian jobs. Some of the more familiar tasks related to the medical field, public relations, or culinary area are transferable to the civilian workplace; however, this is not always the case for more specialized military positions (Minnis, 2014).

Young veterans constitute the majority of veterans entering the civilian workforce (Pyle et al., 2007). Junior enlisted military members are the lowest rank in the armed services and also the lowest paid (Department of Defense, 2017). Federal research shows that military veterans consistently experience higher rates of unemployment and underemployment than their civilian counterparts (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). Research has also shown that the leading stress factor among junior enlisted service members is a lack of income and resulting financial problems (Pyle et al., 2007). Junior enlisted service members are more likely to have financial hardships, and these young military members are more likely to report problems paying bills than their civilian peers (Buddin & Phuong Do, 2002). These experiences often lead to problems on the job and at home (Tiemeyer, Wardynski, & Buddin, 1999). Gilley (1985) noted that organizations have an obligation to consider the well-being of their members upon separation from the organization.

Despite the challenges faced by veterans in the civilian workforce, there are many benefits associated with hiring former military members. A study examined different United States companies and found that many of the companies claimed there were economic and professional benefits derived from the hiring of veterans. While there were some challenges mentioned, there was still value to be found when hiring veterans, including public relations, and marketing skills, military skills and training, and equipment operation and safety skills (Harrell & Berglass, 2012; Sargent, 2014; Troutman & Gagnon, 2014).

Social issues. When considering military veterans' transition to the civilian workplace, social factors must be taken into consideration as well, such as the concerns and self-identity of veterans (Loughran, 2014). For example, nearly 85% of service members are male (Bjornestad & Letcher, 2015; Demers, 2013; Hamrick & Rumann, 2011; Reppert, Buzzetta, & Rose 2014). There also exists a growing number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) military veterans (Price & Limberg, 2013; Stebnicki, Grier, & Thomas, 2015). Also, contrary to a common misconception, all veterans separating from the military are not U.S. citizens, including some members of the military who are undocumented minorities (Harris, 2014). The diversity and social issues of the members of the military must be considered to gain a more accurate reflection of the variety of reasons for veteran unemployment (Loughran, 2014).

Transition. Once military members have completed their obligated duties, they are no longer on active military service. The former military members, freed from the obligation to obey direct and lawful orders and conform to the rigidly structured military environment, are now in the position to take charge of their own lives. This transition is

often met with uncertainty and a lack of clarity on the direction of their lives outside the military (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). The anxiety and frustration that veterans often face are the results of a lack of preparation for or expectation of the pending changes that are associated with separation. Upon separation, there is a long and difficult period of adjustment (Gilley, 1985). Veterans unexpectedly find themselves in situations where they no longer receive the same level of attention or care in physical conditions (clothes, housing, food) or daily structure (clear directives and schedule) that was previously provided to them (Minnis, 2014).

A number of veterans have a difficult time readapting to civilian life, while other veterans do not. Each branch of the military provides some form of required training prior to separating from the military (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Each branch of the military mandates a series of classes as part of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP). Topics such as available transition services, expected process hints, and any necessary interventions are covered during separation classes. For those veterans who served in combat areas and may have mental issues or physical injuries, access to medical treatment and other assistance is provided. The training may also include different forms of counseling, assistance, and job search techniques. While it may be useful, the training is focused on immediate separation tasks and the initial job search and is not geared toward long-term requirements for sustainable employment in the civilian workforce (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Veterans recently involved combat or who experience mental health issues or lingering physical injuries may particularly struggle during the period immediately pre- and post-separation. In most cases, these veterans will find it difficult to adjust to the transition from the military atmosphere (Kline et al., 2010).

In fact, a Pew Research Center study of 1,853 veterans revealed that the positive and negative aspects of being a service member carried over as the veterans transitioned out of the military (Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Morin, 2011). The study found that 27% of the veterans surveyed claimed to have had somewhat or very difficult transitions into civilian life for various reasons (see Figure 6) (Morin, 2011). Among the reasons discovered were inability to navigate the job search process and translate military skills and occupations into marketable skills for civilian employment. Being a post-9/11 veteran and having been deployed to a combat area both were found to reduce the ease of transition out of the military (see Figure 6) (Morin, 2011). Additional reasons included trauma and psychological issues such as PTSD (Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Elliott, Gonzalez, & Larsen, 2011).

Those that experienced emotional trauma or some other form of serious injury may have problems with the transition out of the military (Morin, 2011). A large percentage of veterans claimed to experience traumatic flashbacks and post-traumatic stress (PTS) (Fernandez & Short, 2014); these numbers were again significantly higher for post-9/11 veterans than other veteran groups (Morin, 2011). The veterans who experienced trauma and PTS were far less likely to reintegrate back into civilian society easily (Morin, 2011). The current benefits available to military veterans allow for pursuing different options (Ryan, Carlstrom, Hughey, & Harris, 2011). Medical and rehabilitation programs have been dedicated to performing tasks that addresses the needs and issues of veterans and their injuries or sicknesses (Crocker, Powell-Cope, Brown & Besterman-Dahan, 2014).

Anderson and Goodman (2014) conducted a study to determine the needs of veterans after they leave the military. Veterans often return from combat areas as highly trained and uniquely skilled individuals; however, each veteran has his or her own set of individual challenges. As Anderson and Goodman (2014) evaluated the individual veteran's career development, they focused on which skills would be most important to develop for future employment. Anderson and Goodman (2014) found that there was not a single answer to this question, as most veterans returning from combat zones were primarily interested in seeking forms of employment different from their military training.

Once the area of required skills has been addressed by career development experts, the next step is discovering a path that is manageable, yet still assists the veteran in finding a job and starting a career (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Some of the obstacles that the veteran may face during transition are the need for immediate direction on issues or concerns about assistance with post-traumatic stress disorder, illness, and other physical limitations (Anderson & Goodman, 2014).

There will also be a transition period after separation and during the employment seeking process. Many veterans have limited time or resources to seek employment prior to separation due to military obligation (Sargent, 2014; Troutman & Gagnon, 2014). Those leaving the military may experience a period of unemployment, especially for those who are younger, female, or in a minority group (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2017). However, research has shown that proportionately, the number of veterans unemployed is short-lived, and when employment is found, veterans

often perform at higher levels compared to their non-veteran counterparts (Loughran, 2014).

The main goal when assisting veterans that may experience difficulty transitioning is to assist with the veteran's ability to mentally manage and adapt to change. Anderson et al. (2012) explained that veterans must struggle with letting go of former roles and adjusting to a new identity as a former service member. Part of this struggle may be explained in the work of psychologist Abraham Maslow, who attempted to explain what commonly motivated people (McLeod, 2007). Maslow's earliest research and publication is known as the *hierarchy of needs* and included five motivational needs that govern decision making, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid (Maslow, 1943, 1954). If a person has not been able to fulfill their needs at the different levels, then they are not able to move on to achieve the next level or need (Maslow, 1962). Veterans transitioning out of the military are faced with the loss of their provider of Maslow's most basic needs (food and shelter) as well as social connections and the aforementioned loss of identity as a service member. Therefore, as the veteran attempts to reintegrate into civilian life with new motivational factors outside of the military, there may be a period of adjustment because of the change in structure, the exposure to a different organizational culture and the individual's identity and role in that culture, and varying individual areas of responsibility (Anderson & Goodman, 2014).

A large portion of veterans separating from the military claim that transition is not difficult. Regardless, there is still a significant portion of veterans that find it difficult to fit in (See Figure 6) and resume the civilian life they experienced prior to the military (Morin, 2011).

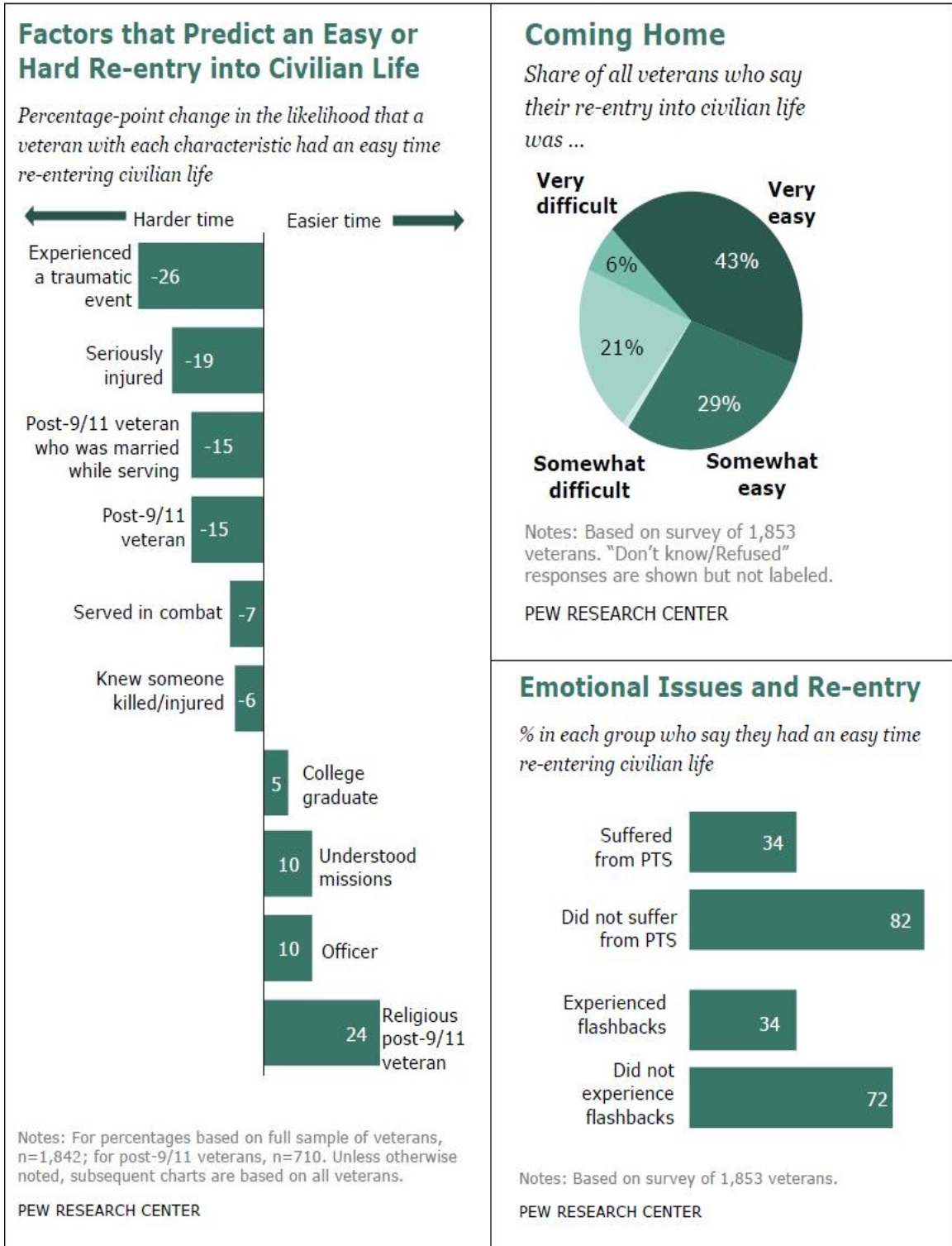


Figure 6. Veteran re-entry into civilian life - modified from Morin (2011).

Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory drew on ethology, cybernetics, developmental psychology, and other areas that changed the scientific view on a child's tie to the mother and its disruption through separation, deprivation, and bereavement (Bowlby, 1958). After decades of research, a reformulation of Attachment Theory was published in 1969 by Bowlby and later contributed to by Ainsworth (Bretherton, 1992). Ainsworth contributed to Bowlby's research by adding the concept and exploration of the mother's maternal instincts and sensitive awareness to the needs of a baby (Bowlby, 1973).

The attachment relationships between adults began to gain notice in the early 1970s with studies of adult bereavement and marital separation (Bretherton, 1992). Attachment Theory research revealed the development of emotional bonds and trust between adults and those that they have determined to be important in life such as family, friends, and relationship partners (Ainsworth, 1989; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Mazaheri, 2000). As more time passed, other research also contributed to the theory and how it relates to humans and work (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). Researchers noted the way adults would often describe themselves in different employment situations: feeling safe, secure, avoidant, ambivalent, and other terms normally associated with the attachment paradigm (Bretherton, 1992).

Previous research had identified adverse outcomes of job insecurity, including decreased job satisfaction and affective commitment (Sverke et al., 2002). Crucial affective reactions to job insecurity, lowered job satisfaction, and affective commitment can be harmful and costly for both the individual and the organization (Sverke et al., 2002). Research has also noted positive impacts of attachment in organizations. When

individuals become attached, they tend to be more trusting of those in charge (Jiang, 2017). When individuals are attached to their organization, it creates a feeling of unity with fewer concerns about negative issues, such as concern for employment.

Organizational members who experience feelings of attachment tend to seek emotional support and view the organization as a fair establishment (Jiang, 2017).

A certain level of social engagement takes place within organizations, and individuals often bond through personal friendships, professional relationships, and social connections. Such interaction provides an internal system for networking and the building of relationships and social capital based on reputation and shared experiences (Arthur et al., 1995). Employees take part in this as a way of building relationships that may benefit them and their career (Inkson & Arthur, 2001). When someone departs an organization, the networking that was established is often lost (DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994). Many people find self-worth and status in their careers, as they feel their purpose, status, and value are directly connected to their organizations and positions (Parker, 2002).

Transition Theory

Transition Theory is the process by which adults may experience and respond to change (Schlossberg, 1981). According to Schlossberg (1981), Transition Theory originates from Crisis Theory, which described short periods of imbalance that may result in newer ways of accomplishing a task or attempting to better manage a situation (Minnis, 2014; Schlossberg, 1981; Wilson, 1993). Studies performed to describe the transition methods of different age groups have examined older adults, retired adults, and working adults (Anderson et al., 2012). There also exists a psychosocial transition which is described as the process of developing a new and fresh set of ideas that will allow the

person to choose different methods to better adapt to their individual situation (Parkes, 1971).

Transition Theory is similar to the theory of adaptation and transition which may include adapting to new support groups, recognizing new likes and dislikes, and also pursuing new ways to believe in oneself (Schlossberg, 1981). According to Schlossberg (1981), a transition can be said to occur if a situation causes individuals to change their perception about themselves and the world around them. As a result, with the change in insight, there must also be a related change in behavior and relationships (Schlossberg, 1981). This definition of transition is used to define more subtle changes such as loss of employment or awaited events, in addition to more common life experiences (Schlossberg, 1981).

Adapting to the transition is a procedure that requires the process of synthesizing the new change so that it becomes part of the new life situation (Goodman et al., 2006). The success of adapting to the transition relies on situational factors. Factors that must be considered include the resources that are available, if there is a change in position or roles, the source of the change, the timing of the change, how stressful the change is, and how long the change will remain (i.e., is it a permanent change or a temporary change?). As the transition commences, these factors will be vital parts of the adaption process and may determine how successfully a transition is embraced or resisted (Schlossberg, 1981).

As individuals move through the different phases of transition, there will be a period of adjustment that will require accepting the situation and the environment. This process may require that a person or group be more receptive to the experiences of a

different environment. This new area will require the individual to embrace or at least respond to the new environment (Wheaton, 1985).

When a job comes to an end and transition is required, some people will easily adjust, and others will experience grief, separation anxiety, and hope for tomorrow. This stage will occur regardless of whether the transition was planned or unplanned (Anderson et al., 2012). One of the most significant things that needs to be done during this period is to look to future reassignment and plan to successfully combine as much work experience as possible with the new goals and performance expectations (Minnis, 2014).

When adults transition through a work-life event, the process involves certain activities that require seeking employment and other activities. This is one of the more common transitions that people will experience during their adult lives (Anderson et al., 2012) (see Figure 7). During this stage of transition, new employees begin to gain more understanding of the new organization's social dynamics and culture. This also occurs when the new employee starts to become aware of the unofficial rules of engagement within the organization (Anderson et al., 2012).

Schlossberg's Transition Theory has been used in previous research on veterans (Ackerman et al., 2009; DiRamio et al., 2009) and has been shown to present an effective way in which to understand the person's change experience. The concept of addressing change is stated in Schlossberg's theory of transition and adaptation. This area of research will help foster an environment of trust to establish new bonds, to establish new levels of appreciation, and to improve on self-reflection and self-image (Schlossberg, 1981).

Transition Theory research has been primarily focused on the overall aspects of job transition with some focus on military veterans (Anderson & Goodman, 2014). Recent research about veterans' transition has used Schlossberg's (1981) theory of transition as it relates to adult styles of learning and Schlossberg's focus on the different methods that adults experience during the process of change (Ackerman et al., 2009). This model was not originally created to be used with veterans; however, it has more recently been applied to the military and veterans' experiences of transition (Ackerman et al., 2009).

The term transition generally refers to either the time period or the process during which a service member moves from a military to a civilian setting or the movement through various systems of post-military related medical care. Phrases such as "transition to veteran status" are common and tend to emphasize movement into or across institutional systems such as the Department of Veterans Affairs (Elnitsky, Fisher, & Blevins, 2017).

Different factors can impact the individual transition process. Despite the heroic acts demonstrated by many of the United States' war veterans, the enormity of life's tasks, such as career choice and housing, often overwhelm these individuals upon their return from military service (Vance & Miller, 2009). Many of these veterans are still coping with the physical and mental scars left behind from their experiences at war, which can sometimes manifest themselves in homelessness, alcohol or drug abuse problems, mental health problems, PTSD, depression, or pathological gambling or sexual addiction. Physical disabilities are also prevalent, as well as gaps in work history (Phillips, Braud, Andrews, & Bullock, 2007).

As military members go through the employment transition process, there will be a period of adjustment that will be challenging for many. The process of overcoming this challenge will contribute to a strong skillset for future transition (Anderson et al., 2012). The transition that veterans experience will force them to interact with new types of people and will most likely change their own perspective of themselves. For those who do not adequately adjust, there may be a period of remorse, withdrawal, and negative self-reflection. For some, it is difficult to escape the environment of the military, where they were accustomed to putting the military's needs before their own (Dillon, 2007).

Coping Resource 4-S's. Multiple factors can impact the individual's transition process. One of the common methods of dealing with transition is to utilize the Coping Resource 4-S's (Anderson et al., 2012). The coping resource is divided into four areas (see Figure 7) that could contribute to the transition process: situation, self, support, and strategies (Anderson et al., 2012).

Self asks individuals who they think they are and how they process transition (Anderson et al., 2012). This reflection causes the participant to reflect on personal characteristics and psychological resources (see Figure 7) (Anderson et al., 2012).

Situation asks what transpired and when it occurred (Anderson et al., 2012). Situation looks at characteristics of events. Facets to take into consideration that may influence the outcome of the transition include triggers, timing, control/resource, change in role, duration, previous experience, and concurrent stress (see Figure 7) (Anderson et al., 2012).

Strategies asks how individuals respond to transition (Anderson et al., 2012). This area looks at coping responses by examining functions and strategies to better plan

for transition through seeking information, taking direct action, or inhibiting action (see Figure 7) (Anderson et al., 2012).

Support asks who or what is around that individuals use to help get through transition (Anderson et al., 2012). This area focuses on what type of social support someone may have as a method of coping with transition. Different types of social support exist: intimate, family unit, friendship, network, and institutional (Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006). Support is an area of concern, because when individuals leave an organization, they often feel abandoned with little or no support from the previous organization (Gilley, 1985). Also, it is important to determine the function of the support team and what options are available (see Figure 7) (Anderson et al., 2012).

The process of assisting former military service members on their journey as they transition out of the military can be an easier transition by using Schlossberg's Coping Resources 4-S Transition Model (Anderson et al., 2012). The veterans have to go through the same process addressing situation, self, support, and strategies (Anderson et al., 2012). In addition, they must be able to adapt, cope, and make decisions. By applying the Schlossberg model, it opens up the topic for further exploration and focus on the four areas. Studies have been dedicated to those who are prepared to sacrifice their lives and are now transferring out of the military. This research is timely and necessary, as it is expected that between 2013 and 2018 one million veterans will separate from the military (Anderson & Goodman, 2014).

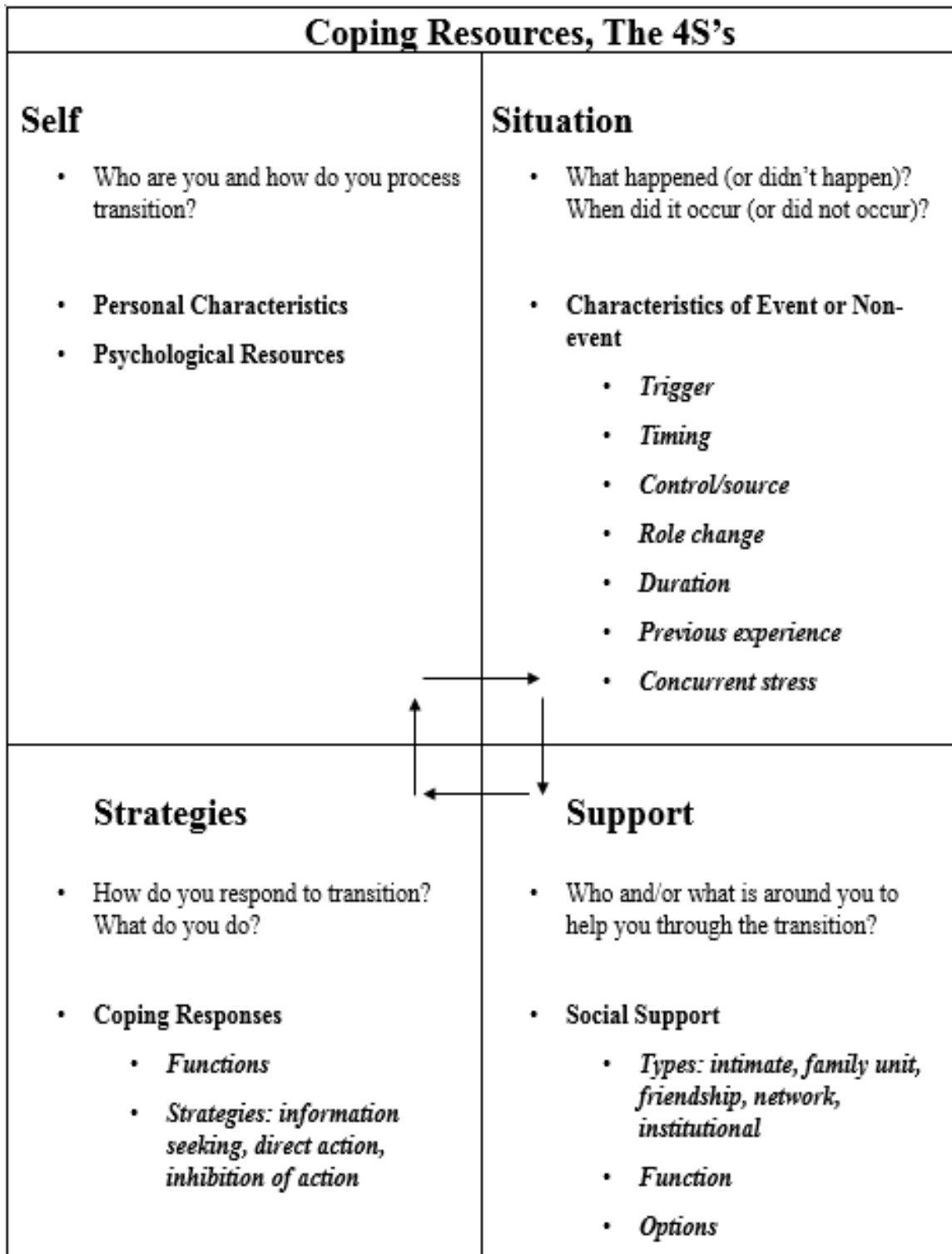


Figure 7. Coping Resources, the 4S's - derived from Anderson et al. (2012).

Summary of the Chapter

The main categories of literature that contribute to the views about this population (see Figure 8). The initial section, transitioning out of military service, explored the focus of the population representation for this study. The next section examined literature about Attachment Theory, and the final section examined different components of Transition Theory.

A gap in the literature exists, which is related to the perceived impact of Attachment Theory on veterans transitioning to the civilian workplace and its impact on their career development. Career development and the services made available for veterans are acknowledged in some of the literature reviewed for this research; however, minimal research addresses the potential complications and effects associated with the veteran's attachment to the military environment. Figure 8 provides an illustration of the literature overview for the overall summary of the literature review.

Literature Overview

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Attachment Theory</p> <p>(Bowlby, 1958)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> drew on developmental psychology and other areas that changed the scientific view on a child's tie to the mother <p>(Bretherton, 1992)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attachment relationships between adults, early 1970s with studies of adult bereavement and separation <p>(Ainsworth, 1989; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Mazaheri, 2000; Shaver & Hazan, 1988)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> emotional bonds and the way these bonds affect behaviors and emotions; how it relates to humans and work <p>(Bretherton, 1992; Jiang, 2017; Parker, 2002)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feeling safe, secure, avoidant, ambivalent, and other terms normally associated with the attachment paradigm; they tend to be more trusting of those in charge 	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Military and Veteran Culture</p> <p>(Powers, 2017; Wood, 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the United States armed forces is made up of five military branches: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy <p>(Garvey-Wilson, Messer, & Hoge, 2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> as a result of the growing number of service members separated, veterans make up approximately 10% of the total U.S. population over the age of 17 years <p>(Ackerman, DiRamio, & Garza-Mitchell, 2009; DiRamio & Spire, 2009; Dunlop, 1999)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> veterans' experiences tend to shape their personality and dictate the way they will act or react in a given situation <p>(Hayden & Buzzetta, 2014; Minnis & Stern, 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is a degree of social distance from other non-veteran civilians that can impact veterans' experiences after leaving the military 	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Employment</p> <p>(Ackerman et al., 2009; Minnis, 2014)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> veterans are a unique subset with increased number of veterans separating and reintegrating into civilian areas <p>(Buddin & Phuong Do, 2002; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017; DOD, 2017; Pyle et al., 2007)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> young veterans, lowest rank, least paid are majority of veterans entering the civilian workforce; unemployment due to age, gender, and ethnicity <p>(Gilley, 1985)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organizations have an obligation to consider the well-being of their members upon separation <p>(Harrell & Berglass, 2012; Sargent, 2014; Troutman & Cagnon, 2014)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> value when hiring veterans, public relations and marketing skills, military skills and training, and equipment operation and safety skills 	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Social Issues</p> <p>(Bjornestad & Letcher, 2015; Demers, 2013; Hamrick & Ramann, 2011; Reppert, Buzzetta, & Rose 2014)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> male dominant population, 85% of service members are male <p>(Harris, 2014; Loughran, 2014; Price & Limberg, 2013; Stebnicki, Grier, & Thomas, 2015)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> social factors must be taken into consideration as well as self-identity of veterans; a growing number of LGBT; not all veterans are U.S. citizens, some are undocumented minorities <p>(Loughran, 2014)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The diversity and social issues of the members of the military must be taken into consideration
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Transition Theory</p> <p>(Ackerman et al., 2009; DiRamio et al., 2009; Minnis, 2014)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> present an effective way in which to understand the person's change experience; combine as much work experience as possible with the new goals and performance expectations <p>(Minnis, 2014; Schlossberg, 1981; Wilson, 1993)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> periods of imbalance that may result in newer ways of accomplishing a task or attempting to better manage a situation; processes in which adults may experience and respond to change <p>(Parkes, 1971; Schlossberg, 1981)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> psychosocial transition, the process of developing a new and fresh set of ideas; change their perception about themselves and the world around them 	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Coping Resource 4-S's</p> <p>(Anderson et al., 2012)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> four areas that could contribute to the transition process: situation, self, support, and strategies; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> self reflection and how process transition; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> situation: what transpired and when it occurred; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strategies: how individuals respond to transition; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support: who or what is around that individuals use to help get through transition <p>(Gilley, 1985; Goodman et al., 2006)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when individuals leave an organization, they often feel abandoned with little or no support from the previous organization 	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Transition</p> <p>(Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Minnis, 2014)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> often met with uncertainty and a lack of direction; no longer have the same level of attention or care that was provided to them by the military <p>(Anderson & Goodman, 2014; Elliott, Gonzalez, & Larsen, 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the need for immediate direction on issues or concerns about assistance with post-traumatic stress disorder, and other physical limitations; next step is discovering a path that is manageable; military provides required training regarding transition assistance programs; they are all focused on the initial job search and related tasks and assistance is not geared toward long-term requirements 	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Transitioning out of the military service</p> <p>(U.S. Census Bureau, 2011; Wolfe, 2012; Zogas, 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 million veterans in the United States, 3.3 million served since 2001, 2 million VA benefits, 200,000 annually discharged <p>(Powers, 2017; Wood, 2017)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers provide leadership, Enlisted are specialists trained for combat, Active Duty: 1.3 million, Enlisted: 1.1 million, Marine Corps Enlisted: 163,760 <p>(Ackerman et al., 2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> join the military: honor, duty, response to September 11, family, patriotism, education, or challenge <p>(Dunlop, 1999; Hayden & Buzzetta, 2014; Minnis & Stern, 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> subculture based on similar lifestyles, language, clothes, and certain behavioral actions that cause them to be separate from non-veteran civilians

Figure 8. Literature Summary

Chapter 3

Design and Method

Introduction

This study examined the career transition experiences of veterans and the potential level of attachment that impacted their transition experience from the military to the civilian workforce. Due to the nature of the study and the need to explore different perceptions during the research, a qualitative approach was used (Creswell, 2013). A better understanding was achieved by focusing on the individual experiences of service members, as they were familiar with or utilized resources that were available to them (Wilson, Leary, Mitchell, & Ritchie, 2009). The experiences and perspectives of the former military members provided insight regarding career development and the transition process after experiencing many years of military camaraderie, support, and culture (Minnis, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they address feelings of attachment and transition out of the military to the civilian workforce. The term *junior enlisted* commonly refers to Marines that hold the rank of E-1 through E-3; however, for the purpose of this study, it refers to military members (rank E-5 and below) that served one to two active duty enlistment terms (four to eight years). This subset of veterans was chosen because a vast majority of veterans entering the civilian workforce are junior enlisted (Pyle, Haddock, Poston, Bray, &

Williams, 2007) who served approximately four to eight years or the equivalent of one to two terms of enlistment (Martorell, Miller, Daugherty, & Borgschulte, 2014). This study focused on the veterans' feelings of attachment to the military way of life as they transitioned to the civilian workforce and how these feelings of attachment impacted veterans' behaviors during the transition period. This study explored why veterans expect the culture of the military to be replicated in the civilian workforce. Additionally, it posited how veterans' expectations produced conflict between veterans and civilian employers related to their performance in the civilian workplace. Practical suggestions for overcoming these issues are discussed in the context of the individual veteran, civilian employers, and the military.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQ) and interview questions (IQ) guided the study:

RQ 1) What are the experiences of veterans (junior enlisted Marine Corps) as they transition to civilian employment?

IQ 1) Describe how you felt when you separated from the military.

IQ 2) Tell me about your experience adapting to your first job after the military.

IQ 3) Tell me a story about the transition to your first job after the military.

RQ 2) How do veterans experience perceived attachment to their former military careers?

IQ 4) What did you miss about the military after you separated?

IQ 5) How would you describe your feelings about your military service?

IQ 6) How did you feel about your military service after working in the civilian workforce?

RQ 3) How do veterans' attachment to their former military careers affect their transition to the civilian workforce?

IQ 7) Tell me about some of the jobs you've held since separating from the military.

IQ 8) How is your civilian workplace different than your military workplace?

IQ 9) How does your experience in your civilian job compare to your experience in the military?

IQ 10) Describe an experience you had that showed a contrast between your civilian employment and military career.

RQ 4) How do veterans feel about the level of difficulty required to adapt to the civilian workforce?

IQ 11) How do you feel the military prepared you for the civilian workforce?

IQ 12) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, what do you want other veterans to know about the transition to the civilian workforce?

IQ 13) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, what do you want civilian employers to know about employing a recent veteran?

IQ 14) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, how do you think the military could better prepare veterans for the transition to the civilian workforce?

RQ 5) How can employers assist veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce?

IQ 15) Based on your experiences, how can civilian employers help veterans succeed in the civilian workforce?

IQ 16) Is there something your civilian employer could have done to make your transition into the workforce easier?

Overview and Influence of the Pilot Study

An unpublished pilot study was conducted to inform the proposed study (Polit, Beck, & Hunger, 2001). A goal of the pilot study was to provide the researcher experience in qualitative research procedures and to determine the accuracy of the instructions used (Simon, 2011). The pilot study also allowed the researcher to gain experience in seeking, selecting, and interviewing participants for the study and to practice processing the collected data. In addition, it also allowed for the researcher to become more aware of the overall research process and be able to improve upon interaction with participants and be more comfortable moving forward with a similar study (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2010). This pilot study was used to pre-test a research instrument to be used in the final study with no guarantee that the final study would have similar results; however, it did increase the likelihood of similar outcomes (Baker, 1994).

This exploratory qualitative pilot study was conducted at a community college in Los Angeles, California. Using portraiture methodology, rich qualitative data was collected, and a two-phase analysis process was used that helped to better identify opinions and interesting insights that contributed to the creation of an articulated description of the participants (Golsteijn & Wright, 2013).

The volunteer participants for this pilot study were two veterans currently attending college as full-time or full-time equivalent students. Both volunteer participants were 20 – 25-year-old males of different ethnicities. Participant interviews

revealed each military veteran's individual perspectives. Accordingly, valuable information was collected and contributed to the phenomenological exploration of each individual as they transitioned from the military to the civilian workforce.

The interviews provided rich and reliable data. It was discovered that both individuals had similar experiences; however, using a larger number of participants may have provided greater insight and understanding. The veterans provided suggestions on what employers should be looking for when hiring a veteran. The interviews also identified that employers did not understand that military veterans have valuable experience, which was attributed to the lack of understanding employers have of the military. Results suggested that future employers could benefit from a better understanding of military experiences and jargon. The pilot study demonstrated a disconnect between the veteran and the expectation or fear of the position to which they applied. An additional aspect learned from the pilot study was the need to better screen applicants to ensure better alignment with the proposed study.

Research Design

This research was based on two theoretical foundations found in the literature; *Attachment Theory* and *Transition Theory*, as they impact veterans transitioning out of the military to the civilian workforce (see Figure 9). Qualitative interviews with former military service members were conducted to collect data and information on their individual personal experiences. The participants were solicited via a veteran's research screening questionnaire. This was distributed to a network of former service members. The target participants were chosen from a list of former military colleagues and associates of the researcher. Recruiting reflected purposive sampling, with the intention

of recruiting a variety of combat and non-combat veterans to explore the experiences of attachment and transition of Marine Corps veterans. The candidates that were selected had common military rank and time in service and had served in the Marine Corps. Homogeneous and criterion sampling are essential to a phenomenological study; therefore, a small population was selected, and this decreased the generalizability of the data and conclusions (Creswell, 1998).

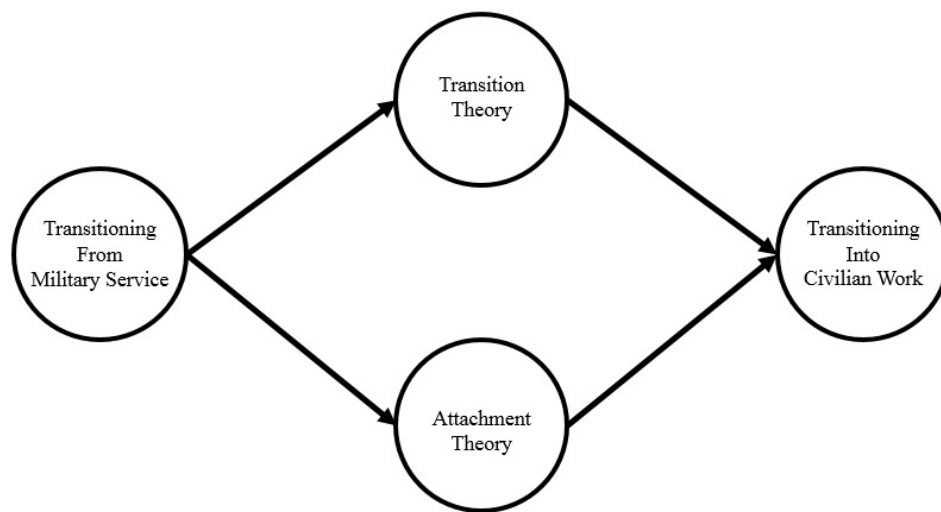


Figure. 9. Four major domains of this research

Full and rich data and a better sense of understanding of the participants were obtained through semi-structured interviews (Patton, 2015). This was done through a hermeneutic phenomenological study that allowed for the identification of emerging themes and certain areas of interest (van Manen, 1990). The phenomenological research method allowed for a greater understanding of the data presented and the meaning of the lived personal experiences (van Manen, 1990).

Hermeneutic phenomenological research. To fully comprehend the veterans' perspectives and understand their thoughts and feelings in their individual stories, the researcher used hermeneutic phenomenology to go beyond an analysis of the dialogue and attempted to become part of their experiences (Minnis, 2014). Phenomenological research is described as the study of a phenomenon of common interest within a specific group of people (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology can be used to explain key concepts of shared experiences and meaning (Dowling, 2007). Phenomenology becomes hermeneutical when its methods are used to analyze the meanings of lived human experiences for the participants (Gadamer, 1960; Heidegger, 1962). The continued development of hermeneutic phenomenology explores the phenomenology of human conversation and the significance of details, history, and tradition in an attempt to gain better understanding of the human experience (Gadamer, 1989). Hermeneutic phenomenology is also used to gain a better understanding of the individual experiences of other people and to comprehend the significance of those experiences as they relate to all human experience (van Manen, 1990).

One of the key concepts of phenomenological research is the ability to explore and comprehend the lived experiences of others regarding a specific experience or a particular phenomenon (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008). In the process of developing frameworks and theories, it is often forgotten that human interaction generates these frameworks as opposed to the reverse (van Manen, 1982). The experiences of each person's life are separate from those experiences of other people; therefore, it is important to explore each of those experiences from the point of origin or the original source of information. Phenomenology focuses on the lived experiences exactly as they are, without

judgment of the person sharing the experience (Creswell, 2013). As a result, it was vital for the researcher to focus on the participants' personal experiences, views, and understandings and not applied personal viewpoints and expectations (Dowling, 2007). The use of hermeneutic interviews provided an opportunity to analyze, define, and develop detailed ideas or principles as they were experienced in everyday life (van Manen, 1990).

Participants

Participants for this study were chosen by purposeful sampling from the population of veterans who were junior enlisted Marines that served four to eight years. This group of veterans had been chosen because a majority of veterans entering the civilian workforce were junior enlisted (Pyle et al., 2007) who served approximately four to eight years or the equivalent of one to two terms of enlistment (Martorell et al., 2014). Because this study focused on the transition from the military to the civilian workforce, an additional requirement for participation included some level of civilian workforce experience post-military enlistment.

The researcher compiled a list of potential volunteer participants from a list of former personal military colleagues and associates. After a list of potential candidates for this study was generated, the veterans were contacted via email (see Appendix C) to determine their desire to volunteer for this study. The recipients then completed a veteran's screening questionnaire (see Appendix E) to determine if they met the criteria for this study. The number of participants selected varied and was determined by the quality and quantity of information obtained to ensure that the study reached saturation (Seale, 1999). Saturation of data is obtained at the point when the researcher recognizes

that more data would not lead to more information related to the research questions (Seale, 1999).

Once it had been determined that each potential candidate had met the criteria, then each willing participant was informed of what involvement included as well as the fact that participation was voluntary. The participants were informed that they were able to terminate the interview at any point, with no consequence or penalty. Also, a signed letter of understanding was required (see Appendix G), stating that the participants were willing and able to participate and were available for further questions, if necessary. Each participant was asked a series of questions concerning certain aspects of their personal military experience and career as it related to transitioning out of the military to the civilian workforce (see Appendix B). Additional questions were required for clarification when more detail was required, or if follow up questions were necessary to get clarity on any specific area (Merriam, 2009).

Data Collection Approaches

Prior to screening potential applicants or participants, approval was acquired by completing all necessary Institutional Review Board (IRB) forms from The University of Texas at Tyler (see Appendix A). Once authorization was obtained to move forward with research and data collection, only then did the researcher start selecting potential participants who completed the screening questionnaire (see Appendix E) and move forward with the study.

Data was then collected through an interview process that focused on the veterans and their personal stories and experiences. A list of guiding questions (see Appendix B) was used in an effort to solicit the veterans' personal insights (Merriam, 2009). The

transition from the Marine Corps to the civilian workforce was discussed, with particular attention given to apparent levels of attachment to the military camaraderie, support, and culture.

Additionally, personal observations and a field note journal were kept to log elements such as visual observations, thoughts, emotions, and reactions. The journal also assisted in recording nonverbal components which contributed to the interview and data that was collected. The use of the field note journal is encouraged in qualitative research to record data and assist in the analysis of information collected (Creswell, 2013; Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2005; Mulhall, 2003; Patton, 2015).

Interviews

Once individuals were recruited and determined to meet the requirements for participation in the main study, face-to-face interviews were scheduled one at a time, allowing approximately 45 – 60 minutes per interview. This provided sufficient time to complete the interview questions and allow enough time to make necessary notes deemed relevant during the interview process. An interview was performed with each of the selected voluntary participants. Each interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed. Once the transcripts were completed, the interviewer and participant reviewed the transcripts for completeness and accuracy of information before continuing with the data analysis.

Each interview was conducted in person so that nonverbal details were included. The field journal and note portion of data collection also included elements such as body language, facial expressions, physical reactions, and other non-spoken elements that helped provide a better understanding and detailed reflection of the situation and the

interview. An agreed upon location was determined by the interviewer and the participant to ensure a safe and relaxed atmosphere that best facilitated the interview. The interviews were then recorded while additional written notes were taken that marked down any points of interest, which provided a more detailed understanding and mental reconstruction of the interview. The volunteer participants were then assigned designations (IP1, IP2, etc.) that created a safer environment and protected the identity of the veterans from recognition in the audio recorded interview and the written notes.

Each semi-structured interview took approximately 45 – 60 minutes. A list of interview questions served as the general outline for the interview. Each participant was asked multiple open-ended interview questions in an effort to gather rich information about the subject matter. This allowed the researcher flexibility to guide the participants to provide varied responses, as they were asked identical questions on the same subject matter. Probing questions encouraged elaboration and greater detail in responses (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). In an effort to identify emerging themes, the researcher constructed questions designed to elicit detailed responses from the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The veterans were asked the same set of interview questions that focused on their experiences during and after the military. The interview consisted of a round of simple questions that were designed to further explore the veteran's personal experience as it related to the transition to the civilian workforce and any areas of attachment or anxiety that were experienced after separating from the military. There was also a focus on advice for other veterans. The knowledge and experience of the participants was used to

allow others to be aware of possible support and direction that may prove useful in the transition.

The goal in using the interview process as a way of collecting data was to allow for the veteran to describe a more complete picture of their personal experience in and out of the military. It also allowed them to provide a detailed story of their experience with the culture of the military and the experiences that they had encountered since separating from the military, as best as they could recall. This process also allowed the veteran to be able to provide a more complete understanding of their expectations of joining or attempting to join the civilian workforce. It gave special attention to individual expectations or needs that were formerly provided by the military. Many of the details from the interview were captured by allowing the participant to engage in telling their own personal stories and experiences (Boje & Tyler, 2009).

The storytelling aspects of the interview provided a way for the participants to personally and subjectively explore experiences, which they related to the social and cultural environments in which they occurred (Cohen & Mallon, 2001). As the participants told their personal stories, the interview structure allowed them to share a more casual perspective. This type of interaction allowed for the participants to provide a more realistic personal reflection of their own personal truths as they experienced them.

The interview consisted of a series of simple questions that established a level of understanding and engagement. Impromptu probes and clarifying questions were asked to keep the participants on track during the interview and allowed the interviewer to encourage participants to link their reactions or concepts across the guiding questions (Minnis, 2014). Each of the veterans agreed they would be available to be contacted for

specific clarifications and follow up questions. After the interviews, the recordings were typed into formal transcripts of the interview and included as much of the interview as possible beyond the words and stories told. The field note journal and side notes completed the visual image of the scenario, so that the most detailed amount of data was collected. The participants were provided copies of the completed transcripts to review, verify for precision, and provide any needed corrections or further clarification.

Data Analysis

Interviews were performed with each of the voluntary candidates. With permission from each of the participants, the interviews were conducted in person and recorded using a digital recorder. All audio recordings were then immediately transcribed and evaluated. The transcripts were examined, coded, and interpreted to identify reoccurring themes from the interview (Boyatzis, 1998). The researcher then used *NVivo* and *MAXQDA* to increase the accuracy of the data analysis method (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). *NVivo* and *MAXQDA* are software that supports qualitative research. They are designed to help organize, examine, and find insights in qualitative data. Next, codes were developed using *NVivo*, *MAXQDA*, and the transcribed, recorded interviews (Creswell, 2014).

To increase legitimacy, the researcher used triangulation, and member checks were conducted to ensure validity (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Mathison, 1988). To assist with evaluations and cross-checking, the researcher collected data in three ways: observations, interviews, and field notes (Merriam, 2009).

The field note journal and transcriptions were combined after being checked for accuracy. The next step in the process was to read over the transcripts and assign

numbers to each of the lines of data. The assigned line numbers were used to reference information from the field note journal. It was also necessary to indicate lines that were questions, so that responses would be differentiated. This process of line identification and numbering was done for each interview, ensuring precision and reliability.

After ensuring accuracy, the next step began the coding process. The process of coding required careful observation and comparison of information to find reoccurring concepts or developing points that emerged through the lines of data and notes recorded. Once repetition in data concepts and ideas began to emerge, the researcher began the process of informal coding. The codes were assigned to specific areas of interest and then identified as common themes. Once the codes appeared to connect, a list of the different reoccurring themes and concepts were noted. Additionally, the data was examined to ensure that the common themes and identified areas were accurately sorted into similar areas and groups. It was also necessary to keep a record of the process as it happened to ensure the recording of procedures and the thought process at the time the information was being coded.

The next step was to attempt to interpret the information collected and coded. After identifying common themes and reoccurring topics, the coded information was processed by combining and separating different strands of information to identify themes in the data. This allowed for areas deemed important to have some creative flexibility to be assigned and reassigned when necessary into more prominent apparent themes or grouped areas assigned by similar meanings (Creswell, 2013). Once the more prominent themes were addressed and identified, the researcher examined some of the less frequent themes and combined them into larger themes when possible.

Reliability and Validity

From a qualitative perspective, reliability and validity are important to make sure that if anyone is inclined to utilize the research, he or she can be assured that the data provided and the information collected was properly interpreted, organized, and collected. Validity and reliability are important so that others can know that the concepts and data collected are accurate and can be trusted (Merriam, 2009).

In an attempt to maintain reliability and validity, a number of strategies were applied to the collection, interpretation, and the management of data. Examples of such strategies include ensuring accuracy of the recording, the transcription, and data processing. Additional checks included referencing the existing literature and seeking additional literature to confirm emerging similarities or patterns in concepts with those from other studies (Minnis, 2014). To ensure this study's validity, thorough field notes were kept and used during the data interpretation and coding process. After the interviews were transcribed, the researcher incorporated the written notes into the data collection and analysis process.

An additional method that ensured the reliability and validity of this study was to continue interviewing participants until data saturation was reached (Merriam, 2009). It was necessary to continuously compare data from each of the interviews to monitor the emerging themes and to determine when no new information appeared from the interviews. The reliability and validity of this research study was further enhanced by verifying the accuracy of transcriptions and coded segments with participants.

Role of the Researcher

Because of the researcher's social and professional connections with the participants from which interview participants were selected and his direct experience with the military, some potential candidates might have had reservations about participating in the study (Creswell, 2013). This was overcome by reassuring the individual volunteer participants of anonymity.

The researcher is a former enlisted Marine, his level of personal experience and knowledge is likely greater than most researchers, which may have created bias. However, due to the researcher's knowledge and experience with enlisted Marines and with separation from the military, there was a greater chance for bonding and understanding. This level of personal knowledge afforded the researcher a greater understanding of both the content and military culture discussed in the interviews. The rapport developed between the researcher and the interview participants over their common military backgrounds encouraged the participants to speak more candidly and freely about their experiences both in the military and in transitioning out of the military. To remove bias, however, the researcher was fair and non-partial whenever possible (Creswell, 2013).

Limitations

Limitations are constraints outside of the control of the researcher and inherent to the actual study that could affect the generalizability of the results (Terrell, 2016, p.42). Some of the limitations of this study were sample size, the limited number of participants available that fulfilled the criteria of junior enlisted Marines that served on active duty for four to eight years (Creswell, 2013). The participants were solicited via a veteran's

research screening questionnaire. This was distributed to a network of former service members. The target participants were chosen from a list of former military colleagues and associates of the researcher. Recruiting reflected purposive sampling, with the intention of recruiting a variety of combat and non-combat veterans to explore the experiences of attachment and transition of Marine Corps veterans. The candidates that were selected had common military rank and time in service and had served in the Marine Corps. Homogeneous and criterion sampling are essential to a phenomenological study; therefore, a small population was selected, and this decreased the generalizability of the data and conclusions (Creswell, 1998). Personal opinion is always prone to bias, which may reduce the validity of any data obtained or interpreted. Since qualitative studies use different aspects of data, the findings of this study were subject to interpretation by the researcher (Morse & Richards, 2002). Participants were volunteers and may have elected to participate because of their experience with the phenomenon of the study; therefore, it may have decreased the generalizability of the findings. Also, the researcher is a former enlisted, Marine Corps veteran with social and professional connections to some of the study's participants from which interview participants were recruited. This may lead to an inherent bias derived from the researcher's own background (Creswell, 2013). Further limitations included lack of substantial literature on Attachment Theory in the context of veterans.

Summary of the Chapter

This study examined the career transition experiences of former military members and the potential level of attachment that may impact their transition experience from the military to the civilian workforce. The goal of this study was to gain a better

understanding of veterans as they separate from their military obligation and transition into the civilian workforce environment.

This study employed a phenomenological research design. Phenomenological research is also known as the process of using the reflection and experiences of other people to gain a better understanding of a deeper meaning or level of significance as it relates to human experience (van Manen, 1990). A pilot study was used as a small-scale version in preparation for this larger study. While the study did show a potential outcome of a larger study, there were no guarantees of similar outcomes. Participants for the main study were chosen by purposive sampling from the population of veterans who were junior enlisted Marines that served for four to eight years. Data was collected through a series of interviews which focused on the veterans and their personal stories and experiences. The interview process was a way of collecting data that allowed the veterans to describe a more complete picture of their personal experiences in and out of the military. It also allowed the individual to provide a more detailed story of his experience with the culture of the military and the experiences encountered since separating from the military.

Interviews were performed with each of the voluntary candidates. Interviews were then recorded and transcribed. The field note journal and transcriptions were combined after being checked for accuracy by the participant. The next step in the process was to read over the transcripts and assign numbers to each of the lines of data. After ensuring accuracy, the coding process began. Once the codes connected, a list of the different reoccurring themes and concepts were noted. The next step was an attempt to interpret the information that was collected and coded.

Several steps were taken to ensure reliability and validity in data collection, interpretation, and organization. Limitations were also discussed, including the researcher's own background as a former enlisted Marine with social and professional connections to some of the study's participants. Further limitations included the sample size and specificity as well as lack of substantial literature on Attachment Theory in the context of veterans. A detailed presentation of the results of data collected and analyzed for the study follows in chapter four.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

This chapter contains the results of the data collected and analyzed for this study. First, the results of the data collection and demographics from volunteer participants including *non-combat Marine Corps veterans* and *combat Marine Corps veterans* are provided. Second, this chapter gives the explanation and examination of the data as it is presented for each research question and the associated interview questions. Multiple themes emerged during the research analysis process. Third, the results are presented for each research question in a series of tables and explanations that identify the themes, subthemes, coded segments, and examples of coded segments that support the relevant sections of the coded transcript. Finally, the chapter concludes with a chapter summary.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they experience feelings of attachment and transition out of the military to the civilian workforce. This study focused on the veterans' feelings of attachment to the military way of life as they transitioned to the civilian workforce and how these feelings of attachment impacted veterans' behaviors during the transition period. Additionally, it posited how veterans' expectations produced conflict between veterans and civilian employers related to their performance in the civilian workplace.

Finally, the study discussed practical suggestions for overcoming these issues in the context of the individual veteran, civilian employers, and the military.

Research Participants

The researcher compiled a list of potential volunteer participants from a list of former personal military associates. The participants were solicited via a veteran's research screening questionnaire. This was distributed to a network of former service members associated with the researcher. There were 75 responses to the screening questionnaire (see Appendix F). A list of respondents who met the criteria of former active duty enlisted Marines who served for four to eight years and had some level of civilian workforce experience post-separation was generated, and potential volunteers were then contacted and agreed to participate further in this study. In an attempt to see if the veterans' interview responses would be influenced by their experiences during their military careers, an equal number of combat and non-combat Marines were interviewed. Interviews continued until reaching the point of saturation. In total, 12 interviews were completed for this study.

Demographics

Non-combat Marine Corps veteran demographics. Six non-combat Marine Corps veterans (i.e., a Marine who had not deployed into a combat zone during his or her enlistment) were contacted and agreed to participate in this study. Because the respondents were ensured anonymity, the participants will be referred to as Interview Participants (IP) in this study (i.e., IP1, IP2, IP3, IP4, IP5, and IP6). To fulfill the criteria of this study, the participants chosen were Marine Corps veterans that served on active duty for four to eight years with common military rank and time in service. Because this

study focused on the transition from the military to the civilian workforce, an additional requirement of some level of civilian workforce experience post-military enlistment was required for participation.

At the time of this study, all participants have separated from the Marine Corps and are now in veteran status. The non-combat veterans' self-reported end of active duty service (EAS) dates were all different: 2008; 2010; 2012; 2014; 2015; and 2016. One veteran (16.67% of participants) served on active duty for seven years, one (16.67%) served six years, three (50%) served five years, and one (16.67%) served four years. Each of the participants self-reported a rank of NCO and below. Two veterans (33.33%) separated at the rank of E-5/SGT, three (50%) reached the rank of E-4/CPL, and one (16.67%) was the rank of E-3/LCPL. All of the participants had some level of civilian workforce experience, and all of them were employed within different industries at the times of the interviews. Two (33.33%) worked in the service industry, one (16.67%) worked in sales, one (16.67%) worked in insurance, one (16.67%) worked in government, and one (16.67%) worked in a professional industry. The veterans identified their current ages at the time of the interviews and not at the time they served on active duty in the military. Three (50%) of the participants reported their current age as 31-35 years, and three (50%) reported their age as 26-30 years. The participants represented a diverse range of races/ethnicities including two (33.33%) white/Caucasians, two (33.33%) African-Americans, one (16.67%) American Indian, and one (16.67%) Hispanic. Participants' levels of education were split evenly, with three (50%) that had attended college but had not yet obtained a degree and three (50%) that attended college and obtained a degree (see Table 1).

Table 1
Non-Combat Marine Corps Veterans

	IP1	IP2	IP3	IP4	IP5	IP6
USMC Veteran	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EAS	2012	2015	2014	2010	2008	2016
Active Years	5	7	6	5	4	5
Combat	No	No	No	No	No	No
Rank	E-5 SGT	E-4 CPL	E-4 CPL	E-5 SGT	E-3 LCPL	E-4 CPL
Employed Post USMC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Currently Employed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry	Sales	Service	Government	Service	Insurance	Professional
Current Age (years)	31-35	26-30	26-30	31-35	31-35	26-30
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Race/ Ethnicity	White/ Caucasian	American Indian	Hispanic	White/ Caucasian	African American	African American
Education	College degree	College, no degree	College, no degree	College, no degree	College degree	College degree

Note. IP = Interview Participant

Combat Marine Corps veteran demographics. Additionally, six combat Marine Corps veterans (i.e., a Marine who had deployed into a combat zone during his or her enlistment) were also contacted and agreed to be participants in this study. To ensure anonymity, the participants will be referred to as Interview Participants (IP) in this study (i.e., IP7, IP8, IP9, IP10, IP11, and IP12). To fulfill the criteria of this study, the participants chosen were Marine Corps veterans that served on active duty for four to eight years with common military rank and time in service. Because this study focused on the transition from the military to the civilian workforce, an additional requirement for participation was some level of civilian workforce experience post-military enlistment.

At the time of this study, all participants have separated from the Marine Corps and are now in veteran status. Each of the combat veterans self-reported EAS dates in one of the following years: 2009; 2012; 2013; 2015; or 2016. Two veterans (33.33% of participants) served on active duty for eight years, one (16.67%) served five years, and three (50%) served four years. Each of the participants self-reported a rank of NCO and below. Three veterans (50%) separated at the rank of E-5/SGT, one (16.67%) reached the rank of E-4/CPL, and two (33.33%) were the rank of E-3/LCPL. All of the participants had some level of civilian workforce experience, and all of them were employed within different industries at the times of the interviews. Two (33.33%) worked in the sales industry, two (33.33%) worked in education, one (16.67%) worked in government, and one (16.67%) worked in a professional industry. The veterans identified their current ages at the time of the interviews and not at the time they served on active duty in the military. Three (50%) of the participants reported their current age as 31-35 years old and three (50%) reported their age as 26-30 years old. The participants' representation of

race/ethnicity included five (83.33%) white/Caucasian and one (16.67%) Hispanic. One (16.67%) participant had attended college but had not yet obtained a degree and five (83.33%) reported obtaining a college degree (see Table 2).

Table 2
Combat Marine Corps Veterans

	IP7	IP8	IP9	IP10	IP11	IP12
USMC Veteran	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
EAS	2009	2012	2015	2013	2012	2016
Active Years	8	4	4	4	5	8
Combat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rank	E-5 SGT	E-4 CPL	E-3 LCPL	E-3 LCPL	E-5 SGT	E-5 SGT
Employed Post USMC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Currently Employed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry	Sales	Education	Professional	Government	Education	Sales
Current Age (years)	31-35	31-35	26-30	31-35	26-30	26-30
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Race/ Ethnicity	White/ Caucasian	American Indian	Hispanic	White/ Caucasian	African American	African American
Education	College degree	College degree	College degree	College, no degree	College degree	College degree

Note. IP = Interview Participant

Research Findings

The findings address the research questions stated in the previous chapters. For data analysis, the researcher analyzed responses from the participants and coded relevant segments. The researcher then grouped the coded segments from the interview questions into subthemes which were further grouped into corresponding themes within each research question. This analysis includes direct quotations from participants to convey the meaning and significance of the coded segments more clearly.

Full and rich data and a better sense of understanding of the participants were obtained through semi-structured interviews. This was done through a hermeneutic phenomenological study that allowed for the identification of emerging themes and certain areas of interest. The phenomenological research method allowed for a greater understanding of the data presented and the meaning of the veterans' lived personal experiences.

To help answer the research questions of this study, interview questions were used to guide the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B). In total, 16 different interview questions were asked to support the five research questions exploring the experience of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they address feelings of attachment and transition out of the military to the civilian workforce.

Restatement of Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

RQ 1) What are the experiences of veterans (junior enlisted Marine Corps) as they transition to civilian employment?

IQ 1) Describe how you felt when you separated from the military.

- IQ 2) Tell me about your experience adapting to your first job after the military.
- IQ 3) Tell me a story about the transition to your first job after the military.
- RQ 2) How do veterans experience perceived attachment to their former military careers?
- IQ 4) What did you miss about the military after you separated?
- IQ 5) How would you describe your feelings about your military service?
- IQ 6) How did you feel about your military service after working in the civilian workforce?
- RQ 3) How do veterans' attachment to their former military careers affect their transition to the civilian workforce?
- IQ 7) Tell me about some of the jobs you've held since separating from the military.
- IQ 8) How is your civilian workplace different than your military workplace?
- IQ 9) How does your experience in your civilian job compare to your experience in the military?
- IQ 10) Describe an experience you had that showed a contrast between your civilian employment and military career.
- RQ 4) How do veterans feel about the level of difficulty required to adapt to the civilian workforce?
- IQ 11) How do you feel the military prepared you for the civilian workforce?
- IQ 12) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, what do you want other veterans to know about the transition to the civilian workforce?
- IQ 13) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, what do you want civilian employers to know about employing a recent veteran?

IQ 14) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, how do you think the military could better prepare veterans for the transition to the civilian workforce?

RQ 5) How can employers assist veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce?

IQ 15) Based on your experiences, how can civilian employers help veterans succeed in the civilian workforce?

IQ 16) Is there something your civilian employer could have done to make your transition into the workforce easier?

Interview and Coding Procedures

In the hopes of making the interview as comfortable, relaxed, and free from distractions as possible, an agreed upon time and location were established with each interviewee. After obtaining a written agreement, the participant was reminded that the interview was voluntary and could be terminated at any time if either the researcher or the participant deemed it necessary, with no repercussions. Once this was explained, each of the participants was then reminded that they could expand on any of the answers and to feel free to incorporate personal experiences in response to the interview questions. The participants were notified with a verbal acknowledgment at the time that the digital recording began and again when it ended. Each interview was audio recorded and then later transcribed for the purpose of triangulation and coding. Each participant was afforded the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the audio transcription and to confirm that the transcript was an accurate reflection of the words and meanings.

MAXQDA and *NVivo* qualitative analysis software were used to assist in the evaluation of the interview transcripts. The researcher was then able to identify coded segments that

appeared most frequently or were most salient for each research question, combine similar segments into subtheme topics, and aggregate the subthemes into themes to address each of the research questions.

The researcher selected coded segments for each of the five research questions resulting in a total of 50 different coded segments. Then the researcher identified the total number of times a coded segment was repeated for each of the interview questions which varied per research question. Finally, the overall total of individual coded segments from the interviews of all 12 participants was determined to be 956. The results of each research question, associated interview questions, themes, and subthemes are presented in this chapter.

Research Question One

RQ 1) What are the experiences of veterans (junior enlisted Marine Corps) as they transition to civilian employment?

IQ 1) Describe how you felt when you separated from the military.

IQ 2) Tell me about your experience adapting to your first job after the military.

IQ 3) Tell me a story about the transition to your first job after the military.

Coded segments. The interview questions for research question one had coded segments which were labeled and then identified for repetition and applicability to the research question. In response to the research question and the three interview questions, there were a combined total of 201 coded segments.

For research question one, the 10 coded segments were identified as: (1) different environment – civilian, combined total 20; (2) enjoyed job (unexpected) – civilian, combined total 13; (3) felt lost – did not plan, combined total 33; (4) individuality/less

camaraderie – civilian, combined total 18; (5) less/no structure – after military, combined total 23; (6) low income/pay – civilian, combined total 21; (7) medical/PTSD issues, combined total 24; (8) no one understands me, combined total 18; (9) relief/happiness/freedom, combined total 9; and (10) unemployment/temporary job, combined total 22 (see Table 3).

Table 3
Coded Segments for Research Question One (RQ1)

<i>Coded Segments</i>	Coded Segments N = 201	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
1 Different environment – civilian	20	9.95%	2.09%
2 Enjoyed job (unexpected) – civilian	13	6.47%	1.36%
3 Felt lost – did not plan	33	16.42%	3.45%
4 Individuality/less camaraderie – civilian	18	8.96%	1.88%
5 Less/no structure – after military	23	11.44%	2.41%
6 Low income/pay – civilian	21	10.45%	2.20%
7 Medical/PTSD issues	24	11.94%	2.51%
8 No one understands me	18	8.96%	1.88%
9 Relief/happiness/freedom	9	4.48%	0.94%
10 Unemployment/temporary job	22	10.95%	2.30%

Subthemes. After the coding process for the three interview questions related to research question one, coded segments were labeled and then identified for repetition and

applicability to the research question. There was a combined total of 201 coded segments. The coded segments were then combined and grouped by commonality and relabeled into subthemes. For research question one, the following five subthemes identified were: (1) positive feelings about transition; (2) less structured environment; (3) personal feelings of alienation; (4) medical/PTSD issues; and (5) difficulty with stable employment. The first subtheme had a combined total of 22 coded segments which was 10.95% of the coded segments for this research question and 2.30% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The second subtheme had a combined total of 43 coded segments which was 21.39% of the coded segments for this research question and 4.50% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The third subtheme had a combined total of 69 coded segments which was 34.33% of the coded segments for this research question and 7.22% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The fourth subtheme had a combined total of 24 coded segments which was 11.94% of the coded segments for this research question and 2.51% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The fifth subtheme had a combined total of 43 coded segments which was 21.39% of the coded segments for this research question and 4.50% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process (see Table 4).

Table 4
Subthemes for Research Question One (RQ1)

<i>Subthemes</i>	Coded Segments N = 201	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
1 Positive feelings about transition	22	10.95%	2.30%
2 Less structured environment	43	21.39%	4.50%
3 Personal feelings of alienation	69	34.33%	7.22%
4 Medical/PTSD issues	24	11.94%	2.51%
5 Difficulty with stable employment	43	21.39%	4.50%

Themes. To get further clarification on research question one regarding the experiences of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they transition to civilian employment, three interview questions were asked. Each of the veterans was asked about their initial experiences when they separated from the Marine Corps. Then they were asked if they recalled their experience of adapting to their first job after the military. Next, they were asked to share a personal story they experienced when they transitioned to their first job after the military.

The themes were derived from the coding of the information collected from the participants during the interview process. The researcher combined the coded segments into subthemes by analyzing the data for trends, repeated ideas, and linked concepts. The themes that developed were considered when contemplating the research questions and the responses provided to the interview questions during the interview process.

The five subthemes (see Table 4) for research question one were further combined, relabeled, and identified into two themes. The first theme had a combined total of 65 coded segments which was 32.34% of the coded segments for research question one and 6.80% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The second theme had a combined total of 136 coded segments which was 67.66% of the coded segments for research question one and 14.23% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. For research question one, the two themes identified were: (a) initial realizations of new experiences and (b) struggles with adaptation (see Table 5).

Table 5
Themes for Research Question One (RQ1)

<i>Themes</i>	Coded Segments N = 201	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
Initial realizations of new experiences	65	32.34%	6.80%
Struggles with adaptation	136	67.66%	14.23%

Initial realizations of new experiences. The first theme for research question one that emerged from the analysis of data generated from the interview questions was

initial realizations of new experiences. This theme combined the subthemes of: positive feelings about transition and less structured environment. The theme included coded segments relevant to: different environment – civilian; less/no structure – after military; enjoyed job (unexpected) – civilian; and relief/happiness/freedom. Selections of direct responses from some of the participants in support of this theme are included below (see Table 6).

Table 6
Participant Responses for RQ1, Theme One

Research Question One, Theme One: Initial realizations of new experiences
Different environment – civilian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Stepping out into an unfamiliar environment, I couldn't understand some of the things that people said. (response: IP2)</i> • <i>So, if someone is looking to be told what to do, when to do it, and how to do it, it's not going to be that way in the civilian world. (response: IP7)</i>
Less/no structure - after military
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Initially when I got out, I missed the structure. (response: IP4)</i> • <i>Some things weren't as rigid, so it was different looking at the civilian side of a perspective of how things were handled after spending so many years dealing with the rigid nature of how we do things in the military. (response: IP9)</i>
Enjoyed job (unexpected) – civilian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thankfully, my first job was fairly independent at a furniture moving company that wasn't high pressure or high stress. (response: IP8)</i> • <i>I worked for a security company, I enjoyed it. (response: IP2)</i>
Relief/happiness/freedom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There was some level of relief to not be owned anymore. (response: IP11)</i> • <i>The joy of knowing that my life is mine on the civilian side, and I can always go somewhere else. (response: IP6)</i>

Struggles with adaptation. The second theme for research question one that emerged from the analysis of data generated from the interview questions was *struggles with adaptation*. This theme combined the subthemes of: personal feelings of alienation; medical/PTSD issues; and difficulty with stable employment. The theme included coded segments relevant to: no one understands me; felt lost – did not plan; individuality/less camaraderie – civilian; low income/pay – civilian; and unemployment/temporary job. Participant comments related to the second theme are shown below (see Table 7).

Table 7
Participant Responses for RQ1, Theme Two

Research Question One, Theme Two: Struggles with Adaptation
No one understands me
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>And you're putting me out into an environment that very few people know what I've been through and can't really understand me. (response: IP11)</i> • <i>I was always butting heads with the owners of the store where I wanted to do things one way and they wanted to do things a different way. (response: IP5)</i>
Felt lost – did not plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I was very much confused and adrift, didn't really know, didn't have any clue what the next step was. (response: IP11)</i> • <i>So, there was a great deal of confusion, I didn't know what I should do, and I felt I should have more time. (response: IP3)</i>
Individuality/less camaraderie – civilian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I really miss the camaraderie, I miss some of my best friends. (response: IP1)</i> • <i>There's way less connection between people. Even in teams, there was no sense of camaraderie. (response: IP10)</i>
Low income/pay – civilian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wasn't making as much money as I thought I was going to. (response: IP3)</i>

- *I needed to pay the bills and just took the first job I was offered.* (response: IP7)

Unemployment/temporary job

- *It took me a while; I was unemployed for 6 - 8 months.* (response: IP1)
- *It took me probably about a year and a half maybe two years to find a stable job and get some guidance and direction in my life.* (response: IP7)

Medical/PTSD issues

- *I had medical issues pop up, and I wanted to re-enlist, but they wouldn't let me because I had started sleepwalking.* (response: IP9)
- *Initially I had some frustration and deep anger issues about stuff I am still dealing with right now.* (response: IP6)

Research Question Two

RQ 2) How do veterans experience perceived attachment to their former military careers?

IQ 4) What did you miss about the military after you separated?

IQ 5) How would you describe your feelings about your military service?

IQ 6) How did you feel about your military service after working in the civilian workforce?

Coded segments. During the process of coding, the researcher selected coded segments for each of the five research questions. Then the researcher identified the total number of times a coded segment was repeated for each of the interview questions. Finally, the overall total of individual coded segments identified for all 12 participants was 956 individual coded segments. Therefore, the interview questions for research question two also had coded segments which were labeled and then identified for repetition and applicability to the research question. In response to the research question and the interview questions, there was a combined total of 245 coded segments.

For research question two, the following 10 coded segments were identified: (1) felt abandoned, combined total 30; (2) missed camaraderie/connection, combined total

40; (3) chain of command, combined total 9; (4) feeling more pride - longer out, combined total 25; (5) feelings of suicide/harm, combined total 14; (6) felt lost - no direction, combined total 28; (7) medical/PTSD issues, combined total 31; (8) missed pay, meals, medical, combined total 25; (9) missed structure - military, combined total 22; and (10) Marine Corps pride, combined total 21 (see Table 8).

Table 8
Coded Segments for Research Question Two (RQ2)

<i>Coded Segments</i>	Coded Segments N = 245	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
1 Felt abandoned	30	12.24%	3.14%
2 Missed camaraderie/connection	40	16.33%	4.18%
3 Chain of command	9	3.67%	0.94%
4 Feeling more pride - longer out	25	10.20%	2.62%
5 Feelings of suicide/harm	14	5.71%	1.46%
6 Felt lost - no direction	28	11.43%	2.93%
7 Medical/PTSD issues	31	12.65%	3.24%
8 Missed pay, meals, medical	25	10.20%	2.62%
9 Missed structure – military	22	8.98%	2.30%
10 Marine Corps pride	21	8.57%	2.20%

Subthemes. After the coding procedure for the three interview questions for research question two, coded segments were labeled and then identified for repetition and applicability to the research question. In response to the research question and the interview questions, there was a combined total of 245 coded segments. The coded

segments were then combined and grouped by commonality and relabeled into subthemes. For research question two, the following five subthemes were identified: (1) basic needs no longer provided; (2) psychological and emotional concerns; (3) separation anxiety; (4) pride with longevity; and (5) camaraderie and stability. The first subtheme had a combined total of 47 coded segments which was 19.18% of the coded segments for this research question and 4.92% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The second subtheme had a combined total of 45 coded segments which was 18.37% of the coded segments for this research question and 4.71% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The third subtheme had a combined total of 58 coded segments which was 23.67% of the coded segments for this research question and 6.07% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The fourth subtheme had a combined total of 46 coded segments which was 18.78% of the coded segments for this research question and 4.81% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The fifth subtheme had a combined total of 49 coded segments which was 20.00% of the coded segments for this research question and 5.13% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process (see Table 9).

Table 9
Subthemes for Research Question Two (RQ2)

<i>Subthemes</i>	Coded Segments N = 245	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
1 Basic needs no longer provided	47	19.18%	4.92%
2 Psychological and emotional concerns	45	18.37%	4.71%
3 Separation anxiety	58	23.67%	6.07%
4 Pride with longevity	46	18.78%	4.81%
5 Camaraderie and stability	49	20.00%	5.13%

Themes. After the coded segments were combined and grouped by commonality and relabeled into five subthemes (see Table 9), the subthemes were further combined, relabeled, and identified into two themes. The first theme had a combined total of 150 coded segments which was 61.22% of the coded segments for research question and 15.69% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The second theme had a combined total of 95 coded segments which was 38.78% of the coded segments for this research question and 9.94% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. For research question two, two themes were identified: (a) loss of support and (b) awareness of connection (see Table 10).

Table 10
Themes for Research Question Two (RQ2)

<i>Themes</i>	Coded Segments N = 245	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
Loss of support	150	61.22%	15.69%
Awareness of connection	95	38.78%	9.94%

Loss of support. The first theme for research question two that emerged from the analysis of data generated from the interview questions was *loss of support*. This theme combined the subthemes of: basic needs no longer provided; psychological and emotional concerns; and separation anxiety. The theme included coded segments relevant to: felt abandoned; missed camaraderie/connection; chain of command; feeling more pride - longer out; feelings of suicide/harm; and felt lost - no direction. A sampling of interview responses that show the theme loss of support is available in Table 11.

Table 11
Participant Responses for RQ2, Theme One

Research Question Two, Theme One: Loss of support
Missed pay, meals, medical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When I was in the Marines, I went on medical leave, and I had no worries. When I got hurt on my civilian job, I had to take off work. (response: IP2)</i> • <i>If any medical issues came up, you just went to see the doc. Good luck finding a doc now. (response: IP10)</i>
Missed structure – military
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I miss the fact that you would always have someone looking out for you, even if you didn't know they were. (response: IP12)</i>

-
- *I still long for the military routine and standards, even now.* (response: IP5)

Feelings of suicide/harm

- *My buddy was killed, and that was really hard for me. I still, you know, still deal with that from time to time.* (response: IP8)
- *Sometimes a Marine wants to hurt themselves, so they don't hurt anyone else.* (response: IP4)

Medical/PTSD issues

- *A lot of times, I don't mention I have been deployed, because I don't want to have to explain about my PTSD. It's easier not to mention it.* (response: IP7)
- *It's hard man. I mean I live it day to day. You know I'm 100 percent disabled from PTSD, and I reflect on things I've lost, it's hard.* (response: IP3)

Felt abandoned

- *It's like the Marines mold you and make you into what they want you to be and then when they're done with you, it's like you're being cast off.* (response: IP1)
- *They're not here to make life better. You're on your own.* (response: IP9)

Felt lost – no direction

- *I didn't know what was next, there was a void, an emptiness.* (response: IP11)
 - *I had some kind of disagreement with myself about feeling like I had fallen off. I don't really know how to explain it.* (response: IP6)
-

Awareness of connection. The second theme for research question two that emerged from the analysis of data generated from the interview questions was *awareness of connection*. This theme combined the subthemes of: pride with longevity; and camaraderie and stability. The theme included coded segments relevant to: medical/PTSD issues; missed pay, meals, medical; missed structure – military; and Marine Corps pride. Participant comments that align with this theme are shown below in Table 12.

Table 12
Participant Responses for RQ2, Theme Two

Research Question Two, Theme Two: Awareness of connection
<p>Missed camaraderie/connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>At any given point in time I knew I could walk out of my barracks room and bang on any one of 20 or 30 different doors and start hanging out or you know go to a movie or somebody would just want to shoot the shit. (response: IP8)</i> • <i>You know there was almost no drama. You can fight about it, share a beer, and get over it. (response: IP2)</i>
<p>Chain of command</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I miss the environment where you may not like the person in charge, but you have to respect that they are in charge. (response: IP6)</i> • <i>Sometimes it isn't so clear who makes the decision on the civilian side of things. You know the military is all structured and you know which person you go to first and that works. (response: IP3)</i>
<p>Feeling more pride - longer out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>So now I'm significantly prouder of my service than I was when I first got out. (response: IP10)</i> • <i>Finally, I am proud of my service. I love the community. I love the fact that I'm part of this tiny club where every time I see somebody with a Marine hat or t-shirt, you know you'll have something in common to talk about. (response: IP5)</i>
<p>Marine Corps pride</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My family has served for over 200 years. So, you know I'm proud I took that step and joined the Marine Corps. (response: IP3)</i> • <i>I definitely don't have any regrets. For the good, the bad, and those things that have forever changed me and molded me into who I am. (response: IP11)</i>

Research Question Three

RQ 3) How do veterans' attachment to their former military careers affect their transition to the civilian workforce?

IQ 7) Tell me about some of the jobs you've held since separating from the military.

IQ 8) How is your civilian workplace different than your military workplace?

IQ 9) How does your experience in your civilian job compare to your experience in the military?

IQ 10) Describe an experience you had that showed a contrast between your civilian employment and military career.

Coded segments. The interview questions for research question three also had coded segments which were labeled and then identified for repetition and applicability to the research question. In response to the research question and the interview questions, there was a combined total of 186 coded segments.

For research question three, the following 10 coded segments were identified: (1) different rules/schedules – civilian, combined total 15; (2) different social expectation – military, combined total 20; (3) felt disappointed after military, combined total 24; (4) individuality/less team work – civilian, combined total 20; (5) lack of respect/appreciation – civilian, combined total 15; (6) looked for military style jobs, combined total 16; (7) more social restrictions – civilian, combined total 16; (8) no/less camaraderie – civilian, combined total 32; (9) poor leadership – concerns, combined total 16; and (10) tried to maintain military standards, combined total 12 (see Table 13).

Table 13
Coded Segments for Research Question Three (RQ3)

<i>Coded Segments</i>	Coded Segments N = 186	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
1 Different rules/schedules – civilian	15	8.06%	1.57%
2 Different social expectation – military	20	10.75%	2.09%
3 Felt disappointed after military	24	12.90%	2.51%
4 Individuality/less team work – civilian	20	10.75%	2.09%
5 Lack of respect/appreciation – civilian	15	8.06%	1.57%
6 Looked for military style jobs	16	8.60%	1.67%
7 More social restrictions – civilian	16	8.60%	1.67%
8 No/less camaraderie – civilian	32	17.20%	3.35%
9 Poor leadership – concerns	16	8.60%	1.67%
10 Tried to maintain military standards	12	6.45%	1.26%

Subthemes. During the labeling of the information for the four interview questions for research question three, coded segments were labeled and then identified for repetition and applicability to the research question. In response to the research question and the interview questions, there was a combined total of 186 coded segments. The coded segments were then combined and grouped by commonality and relabeled into subthemes. For research question three, the following five subthemes were identified: (1) Awareness of change; (2) Trying to maintain status quo; (3) Less structured environment; (4) Does not meet social expectations; and (5) Expecting no cooperation. The first

subtheme had a combined total of 35 coded segments which was 18.82% of the coded segments for this research question and 2.30% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The second subtheme had a combined total of 28 coded segments which was 15.05% of the coded segments for this research question and 3.66% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The third subtheme had a combined total of 56 coded segments which was 30.11% of the coded segments for this research question and 5.86% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The fourth subtheme had a combined total of 31 coded segments which was 16.67% of the coded segments for this research question and 3.24% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The fifth subtheme had a combined total of 36 coded segments which was 19.35% of the coded segments for this research question and 3.77% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process (see Table 14).

Table 14
Subthemes for Research Question Three (RQ3)

<i>Subthemes</i>	Coded Segments N = 186	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
1 Awareness of change	35	18.82%	3.66%
2 Trying to maintain status quo	28	15.05%	2.93%
3 Less structured environment	56	30.11%	5.86%
4 Does not meet social expectations	31	16.67%	3.24%
5 Expecting no cooperation	36	19.35%	3.77%

Themes. To get further clarification on research question three, four interview questions were asked. Each of the veterans was asked some of the jobs held since separating from the military. Then they were asked how their civilian workplace was different from their military workplace. Next, they were asked how their experience in their civilian job compares to their experience in the military. Finally, they were asked to describe an experience they had that showed a contrast between civilian employment and their military career.

The five subthemes were further combined, relabeled, and identified into two themes. The first theme had a combined total of 119 coded segments which was 63.98% of the coded segments for research question three and 12.45% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The second theme had a combined total of 67 coded segments which was 36.02% of the coded segments for research question three and 7.01% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. For research question three, the two themes identified were: (a) desire for military structure and (b) resistance to the changing environment (see Table 15).

Table 15
Themes for Research Question Three (RQ3)

<i>Themes</i>	Coded Segments N = 186	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
Desire for military structure	119	63.98%	12.45%
Resistance to the changing environment	67	36.02%	7.01%

Desire for military structure. The first theme for research question three that emerged from the analysis of data generated from the interview questions was *desire for military structure*. This theme combined the subthemes of: awareness of change; trying to maintain status quo; and less structured environment. The theme included coded segments relevant to: different rules/schedules – civilian; different social expectation – military; felt disappointed after military; individuality/less team work – civilian; lack of respect/appreciation – civilian; and looked for military style jobs. This theme is supported by the coded segments provided and the samples of the direct responses from some of the participants (see Table 16).

Table 16
Participant Responses for RQ3, Theme One

Research Question Three, Theme One: Desire for Military Structure
Different rules/schedules – civilian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The difference between the military and civilian work is no camaraderie.</i> (response: IP1) • <i>We all have different responsibilities; we all have different schedules now.</i> (response: IP8)
Different social expectation – military
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We just had a really good team where we could make fun of each other and bust each other's balls, because we all were on the same team.</i> (response: IP6) • <i>In the military you could have people tell racist jokes, homophobic jokes, and laugh because you knew they would still do anything for you.</i> (response: IP11)
Felt disappointed after military
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I've had plenty of leadership in the Marine Corps who never should have joined, because they have no business attempting to lead others.</i> (response: IP7) • <i>One month after getting out of the Marines, I found out some of my former Marines were killed in action. I felt as though I should have been there.</i> (response: IP4)

No/less camaraderie – civilian

- *I miss unit cohesion; it's not that way in the civilian world. Basically, you're pretty much just trying to survive. (response: IP1)*
- *One thing the Marine Corps had that you don't find on the civilian side of the house, the biggest difference, is no camaraderie. (response: IP9)*

Looked for military-style jobs

- *My security job on base is a lot similar to the military, because I have some military people in my chain of command. (response: IP5)*
- *My job as a trainer is pretty reminiscent of the Marines, because the gym is where you go through pain in order to accomplish something. (response: IP11)*

Tried to maintain military standards

- *I was happy to bring my military influence to my civilian work. (response: IP2)*
 - *To stay in shape, I trained as hard as I did when I was in. (response: IP7)*
-

Resistance to changing environment. The second theme for research question three that emerged from the analysis of data generated from the interview questions was *resistance to changing environment*. This theme combined the subthemes of: does not meet social expectations; and expecting no cooperation. The theme included coded segments relevant to: more social restrictions – civilian; no/less camaraderie – civilian; poor leadership – concerns; and tried to maintain military standards. This theme is supported by the coded segments provided and the samples of the direct responses from some of the participants (see Table 17).

Table 17
Participant Responses for RQ3, Theme Two

Research Question Three, Theme Two: Resistance to the Changing Environment

Lack of respect/appreciation – civilian

- *I didn't feel like my experiences and my knowledge were valued. (response: IP6)*
 - *Probably more often than not I feel disregarded and just underappreciated and woefully unappreciated. (response: IP12)*
-

More social restrictions – civilian

- *My job is very different because people will cry if you tell a joke they didn't like and then some blue falcon would get everyone in trouble. (response: IP1)*
- *People are much more invested in their differences in and maintaining separation rather than working together. (response: IP3)*

Poor leadership – concerns

- *We were there for a purpose, and we were meant to serve that purpose regardless of what we thought or religious beliefs. (response: IP10)*
- *My natural tendency is to assume, like some of my leadership in the Marine Corps, my managers do not care about those under them. (response: IP4)*

Individuality/less teamwork – civilian

- *When I was still in, we always had someone looking out for me. (response: IP8)*
- *There's a lot of individuality at my work, and it's frustrating. (response: IP4)*

Research Question Four

RQ 4) How do veterans feel about the level of difficulty required to adapt to the civilian workforce?

IQ 11) How do you feel the military prepared you for the civilian workforce?

IQ 12) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, what do you want other veterans to know about the transition to the civilian workforce?

IQ 13) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, what do you want civilian employers to know about employing a recent veteran?

IQ 14) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, how do you think the military could better prepare veterans for the transition to the civilian workforce?

Coded segments. The interview questions for research question four also had coded segments which were labeled and then identified for repetition and applicability to the research question. In response to the research question and the interview questions,

there was a combined total of 159 coded segments. For research question four, the following 10 coded segments were identified: (1) military taught life skills/discipline, combined total 20; (2) pride in self, combined total 13; (3) be flexible/adaptive, combined total 13; (4) seek help, combined total 14; (5) less support network - after military, combined total 18; (6) medical/PTSD issues, combined total 24; (7) valuable asset to employer - civilian, combined total 15; (8) positive reinforcement/praise, combined total 13; (9) MOS transition/compatibility, combined total 12; and (10) USMC needs better transition training, combined total 17 (see Table 18).

Table 18
Coded Segments for Research Question Four (RQ4)

<i>Coded Segments</i>	Coded Segments N = 159	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
Military taught life skills/discipline	20	12.58%	2.09%
Pride in self	13	8.18%	1.36%
Be flexible/adaptive	13	8.18%	1.36%
Seek help	14	8.81%	1.46%
Less support network - after military	18	11.32%	1.88%
Medical/PTSD issues	24	15.09%	2.51%
Valuable asset to employer – civilian	15	9.43%	1.57%
Positive reinforcement/praise	13	8.18%	1.36%
MOS transition/compatibility	12	7.55%	1.26%
USMC needs better transition training	17	10.69%	1.78%

Subthemes. After the coding process for the four interview questions for research question four, coded segments were labeled and then identified for repetition and applicability to the research question. In response to the research question and the interview questions, there was a combined total of 159 coded segments. The coded segments were then combined and grouped by commonality and relabeled into subthemes. For research question four, the four subthemes were identified as: (1) self-awareness; (2) be willing to ask for help; (3) be sensitive to individual needs; and (4) additional training support. The first subtheme had a combined total of 33 coded segments which was 20.75% of the coded segments for this research question and 3.45% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The second subtheme had a combined total of 45 coded segments which was 28.30% of the coded segments for this research question and 4.71% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The third subtheme had a combined total of 52 coded segments which was 32.70% of the coded segments for this research question and 5.44% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The fourth subtheme had a combined total of 29 coded segments which was 18.24% of the coded segments for this research question and 3.03% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process (see Table 19).

Table 19
Subthemes for Research Question Four (RQ4)

<i>Subthemes</i>	Coded Segments N = 159	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
1 Self-awareness	33	20.75%	3.45%
2 Be willing to ask for help	45	28.30%	4.71%
3 Be sensitive to individual needs	52	32.70%	5.44%
4 Additional training support	29	18.24%	3.03%

Themes. To get further clarification on research question four, participants were asked four interview questions. Each of the veterans was asked how they felt the military prepared them for the civilian workforce. Then, based on their experiences in the civilian workforce, they were asked what they wanted other veterans to know about the transition to the civilian workforce, what they wanted civilian employers to know about employing a recent veteran, and how they think the military could better prepare veterans for the transition to the civilian workforce. After the identification of subthemes, they were further combined, relabeled, and identified into two themes. The first theme had a combined total of 78 coded segments which was 49.06% of the coded segments for research question four and 8.16% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The second theme had a combined total of 81 coded segments which was 50.94% of the coded segments for research question four and 8.47% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. For research question four, the following two

themes were identified: (a) ask for support and assistance and (b) willingness to provide/assist with training (see Table 20).

Table 20
Themes for Research Question Four (RQ4)

<i>Themes</i>	Coded Segments N = 159	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
Ask for support and assistance	78	49.06%	8.16%
Willingness to provide/assist with training	81	50.94%	8.47%

Ask for support and assistance. The first theme for research question four that emerged from the analysis of data generated from the interview questions was *ask for support and assistance*. This theme combined the subthemes of: self-awareness and be willing to ask for help. The theme included coded segments relevant to: military taught life skills/discipline; pride in self; be flexible/adaptive; seek help; and less support network - after military. Some of the direct responses that are aligned with this theme are shown in Table 21.

Table 21
Participant Responses for RQ4, Theme One

Research Question Four, Theme One: Ask for support and assistance
Military taught life skills/discipline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My experience in the military has helped me to adapt easily to most civilian situations.</i> (response: IP6) • <i>I still keep being disciplined.</i> (response: IP2)

Pride in self

- *I still come to work all squared away. Because it can look great when the military tries to do that. (response: IP7)*
- *I do look for the best way to complete a task as quickly, efficiently, and accurately as I possibly can. (response: IP1)*

Be flexible/adaptive

- *My advice would be to take it one day at a time because it's a different world. I mean there may not be a lot of structure. (response: IP9)*
- *Don't be so quick to share all your personal information. Don't be so forthcoming and open about everything about yourself, because you just never know what a person's true intentions are. (response: IP3)*

Seek help

- *Veterans need the same support or the same kind of support system they had in the Marine Corps. (response: IP11)*
- *Don't be afraid to ask for assistance. There are lots of stuff out there to help the veterans now. If you have benefis, use them. (response: IP5)*

Less support network - after military

- *Six months before your separation start looking for a job on your own. Don't rely on the Marine Corps to provide any assistance. (response: IP10)*
 - *My first civilian boss was more concerned with looking good to her superiors than actually getting anything worthwhile done or taking care of people under her. (response: IP8)*
-

Willingness to provide/assist with training. The second theme for research question four that emerged from the analysis of data generated from the interview questions was *willingness to provide/assist with training*. This theme combined the subthemes of: be sensitive to individual needs and additional training support. The theme included coded segments relevant to: medical/PTSD issues; valuable asset to employer – civilian; positive reinforcement/praise; MOS transition/compatibility; and

USMC needs better transition training. Table 22 contains samples of the direct responses from some of the participants related to this theme.

Table 22
Participant Responses for RQ4, Theme Two

Research Question Four, Theme Two: Willingness to provide/assist with training
<p>Medical/PTSD issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sometimes it's not just a military thing, it's the way a person's mind has become as a result of their military experience. (response: IP1)</i> • <i>Because I have anxiety and PTS, there was some concern that I wasn't going to be able to connect with customers. They were wrong. (response: IP9)</i>
<p>Valuable asset to employer – civilian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If something is not working, the veteran's experience and MOS training can be useful, so employers should be more open to suggestions. (response: IP12)</i> • <i>You can't just go to your command and ask for help. So, it makes you a problem solver. In my experience that is valuable to a civilian employer. (response: IP2)</i>
<p>Positive reinforcement/praise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>You ask, you don't yell, and it should be more like a team rather than a dictatorship like in the military. (response: IP11)</i> • <i>Try to praise us, once in a while. We will work ourselves to death for that. Because we're used to never getting it. (response: IP7)</i>
<p>MOS transition/compatibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If your military skills are transferable, then definitely look into something that you know is comparable or maybe even a job training program. (response: IP6)</i> • <i>Some jobs depending on the MOS can't be translated into civilian jobs. (response: IP4)</i>
<p>USMC needs better transition training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Every way that the Marine Corps intends to assist you in transitioning, it fails miserably. Even my command did nothing to make me want to take the classes seriously. (response: IP10)</i>

-
- *I do not think the answer is anything as simple as making it longer for those transitioning. I think getting the leadership to act like they actually give a damn about Marines and focus on helping them. (response: IP3)*
-

Research Question Five

RQ 5) How can employers assist veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce?

IQ 15) Based on your experiences, how can civilian employers help veterans succeed in the civilian workforce?

IQ 16) Is there something your civilian employer could have done to make your transition into the workforce easier?

Coded segments. The interview questions for research question five also had coded segments which were labeled and then identified for repetition and applicability to the research question. In response to the research question and the interview questions, there was a combined total of 165 coded segments.

For research question five, the following 10 coded segments were identified: (1) chain of command, combined total 6; (2) employers – give veterans a chance, combined total 20; (3) employers – have patience, combined total 14; (4) less supervision – civilian, combined total 10; (5) medical/PTSD issues, combined total 27; (6) MOS transition/compatibility, combined total 10; (7) positive reinforcement/praise, combined total 14; (8) retraining group/plan – civilian, combined total 14; (9) VA benefits/resources, combined total 24; and (10) veteran Mentor – civilian, combined total 26 (see Table 23).

Table 23
Coded Segments for Research Question Five (RQ5)

<i>Coded Segments</i>	Coded Segments N = 165	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
1 Chain of command	6	3.64%	0.63%
2 Employers – give veterans a chance	20	12.12%	2.09%
3 Employers – have patience	14	8.48%	1.46%
4 Less supervision – civilian	10	6.06%	1.05%
5 Medical/PTSD issues	27	16.36%	2.82%
6 MOS transition/compatibility	10	6.06%	1.05%
7 Positive reinforcement/praise	14	8.48%	1.46%
8 Retraining group/plan – civilian	14	8.48%	1.46%
9 VA benefits/resources	24	14.55%	2.51%
10 Veteran Mentor – civilian	26	15.76%	2.72%

Subthemes. After the coding process for the two interview questions for research question five, 10 different coded segments were labeled and then identified for repetition and applicability to the research question. In response to the research question and the interview questions, there was a combined total of 165 coded segments. The coded segments were then combined and grouped by commonality and relabeled into subthemes. For research question five, the following five subthemes were identified: (1) awareness of authority; (2) provide necessary support; (3) help with job placement; (4) be sensitive to veterans’ needs; and (5) veteran resource awareness. The first subtheme had

a combined total of 16 coded segments which was 9.70% of the coded segments for this research question and 1.67% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The second subtheme had a combined total of 40 coded segments which was 24.24% of the coded segments for this research question and 4.18% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The third subtheme had a combined total of 24 coded segments which was 14.55% of the coded segments for this research question and 2.51% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The fourth subtheme had a combined total of 34 coded segments which was 20.61% of the coded segments for this research question and 3.56% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The fifth subtheme had a combined total of 51 coded segments which was 30.91% of the coded segments for this research question and 5.33% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process (see Table 24).

Table 24
Subthemes for Research Question Five (RQ5)

<i>Subthemes</i>	Coded Segments N = 165	Percentage of Coded Segments	Percentage of Overall Coded Segments
1 Awareness of authority	16	9.70%	1.67%
2 Provide necessary support	40	24.24%	4.18%
3 Help with job placement	24	14.55%	2.51%
4 Be sensitive to veteran's needs	34	20.61%	3.56%
5 Veteran resource awareness	51	30.91%	5.33%

Themes. Two interview questions were asked pertaining to research question five and the experiences of the junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they transitioned to civilian employment. Each of the veterans was asked how civilian employers can help veterans succeed in the civilian workforce. Then they were asked something their civilian employer could have done to make their transition into the workforce easier. The subthemes were further combined, relabeled, and identified into two themes. The first theme had a combined total of 80 coded segments which was 48.48% of the coded segments for research question five and 8.37% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. The second theme had a combined total of 85 coded segments which was 51.52% of the coded segments for research question five and 8.89% of the overall coded segments for the entire interview process. For research question five, the two themes identified were: (a) awareness of need for support and (b) allow time for adjustment (see Table 25).

Table 25
Themes for Research Question Five (RQ5)

<i>Themes</i>	Coded Segments N = 165	Percentage of Coded segments	Percentage of Overall coded segments
Awareness of need for support	80	48.48%	8.37%
Allow time for adjustment	85	51.52%	8.89%

Awareness of need for support. The first theme for research question five that emerged from the analysis of data generated from the interview questions was *awareness*

of need for support. This theme combined the subthemes of: awareness of authority; provide necessary support; and help with job placement. The theme included coded segments relevant to: chain of command; employers – give veterans a chance; employers – have patience; less supervision – civilian; and medical/PTSD issues. Table 26 contains a selection of direct responses from some of the participants related to this theme.

Table 26
Participant Responses for RQ5, Theme One

Research Question Five, Theme One: Awareness of need for support
Chain of command
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Civilian leaders tend to be more open; they tend to be more receptive to feedback from the little people. (response: IP5)</i> • <i>With the people that I work with after the Marines, I probably bumped heads with them on occasion because we just didn't see eye to eye. (response: IP8)</i>
Less supervision – civilian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>As long as I got results or if I didn't get results, I got left alone. (response: IP1)</i> • <i>It was up to me to improve my sales, succeed or fail, on my own. (response: IP6)</i>
Positive reinforcement/praise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Just by giving a damn about your employees, that's the kind of stuff that will get even the most disgruntled veteran to work hard for you. (response: IP3)</i> • <i>Make sure to show appreciation and share a thank you. (response: IP11)</i>
Veteran Mentor – civilian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>As soon as you meet another Marine veteran it's like oh we know we are pals because we know where we came from. (response: IP2)</i> • <i>A Marine veteran would be a great mentor and instructor because he knows what we put up with. (response: IP10)</i>
Retraining group/plan – civilian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When a veteran gets out, it is like they are having to deal with being introduced into a new career. A retraining group would be a great idea. (response: IP7)</i>

-
- *I think a lot of these companies need to realize that you're missing out on hard-working veterans. (response: IP5)*
-

MOS transition/compatibility

- *I wish I would have had the chance to sit down with someone and try to coordinate MOS skills with a civilian counterpart. (response: IP9)*
 - *The second company I worked for hired veterans on a regular basis. They had someone that matched military and civilian jobs. (response: IP12)*
-

Allow time for adjustment. The second theme for research question five that emerged from the analysis of data generated from the interview questions was *allow time for adjustment*. This theme combined the subthemes of: be sensitive to veterans’ needs and veteran resource awareness. The theme included coded segments relevant to: MOS transition/compatibility; positive reinforcement/praise; retraining group/plan – civilian; VA benefits/resources; and veteran Mentor – civilian. A sample of the direct responses from some of the participants related to this theme can be found in Table 27.

Table 27
Participant Responses for RQ5, Theme Two

Research Question Five, Theme Two: Allow time for adjustment

Employers - give veterans a chance

- *The Marine Corps is more structured and tight-knit in certain areas, but civilian workplaces can afford to be more relaxed, I guess. (response: IP6)*
 - *There are some good people that are coming out of the military and they would do their best because we are taught to give it your all. (response: IP2)*
-

Employers - have patience

- *Don't be afraid to set strict guidelines. The more guidance they can give a new veteran employee will help set them up for success. (response: IP3)*
- *Out of the military, Marines have to adjust to fighting for themselves versus fighting along with others when you're in the military. (response: IP12)*

VA benefits/resources

- *Reach out to the VA to bring honest candidates that are familiar with the different MOS skills based on their qualifications. (response: IP1)*
- *There should be a system set up to make sure the veterans contact the VA for information or potential medical, education, and maybe other benefits. (response: IP4)*

Medical/PTSD issues

- *Obviously, some of the PTSD issues I've had in the service are often topics people want to avoid and talk about at the same time. (response: IP6)*
 - *There was some concern at first with my military background, mainly because of issues with my disabilities and other medical issues. (response: IP11)*
-

Summary of the Findings

This study focused on the veterans' feelings of attachment to the military way of life as they transitioned to the civilian workforce and how these feelings of attachment impact veterans' behaviors during the transition period. This research was based on two theoretical foundations found in the literature, *Attachment Theory* and *Transition Theory*, as they impact veterans transitioning out of the military to the civilian workforce. Qualitative interviews with former military service members were conducted to collect data and information on their individual personal experiences (see Figure 9). This study explains the intersection of veterans' struggles with both transition and feelings of attachment to the military lifestyle so that the military, veterans, and civilian employers can develop strategies to ease the transitions of the current generation of warriors back to civilian life and foster success in the workplace.

In the process of gaining a greater understanding of issues or concerns addressed during the collecting and analyzing of data on military transition and attachment, this

research was guided by five research questions and used 16 interview questions to further explore these topics. The researcher was able to identify coded segments that appeared most frequently or were most salient for each research question, combine similar segments into subtheme topics, aggregate the subthemes into themes, and combine the themes into a super-theme to address each of the research questions. Once the researcher reached data saturation and thoroughly analyzed all relevant data collected for this study, the researcher determined the following super-themes addressed each of the research questions. Each of these super-themes will be further discussed in chapter five.

Research Question One

RQ 1) What are the experiences of veterans (junior enlisted Marine Corps) as they transition to civilian employment?

During the analysis of the participant responses, as coded segments were combined with like data, the following themes emerged: (a) initial realizations of new experiences and (b) struggles with adaptation (see Table 5). The researcher then further combined the common threads in these two themes into a super-theme. The super-theme that addressed the research question about veteran transition to new employment is *new experiences and struggles* (see Table 28). This super-theme was derived from the overall responses to research question one and reveals that there will be a period of adjustment at a new civilian workplace. During this time of adjustment, the veteran will have new experiences. Some of the experiences will be rewarding and some will be struggles. All the participants agreed it was a learning experience that provided insight into the civilian workplace experience.

Research Question Two

RQ 2) How do veterans experience perceived attachment to their former military careers?

During the analysis of the participant responses, as coded segments were combined with like data, the following themes emerged: (a) loss of support and (b) awareness of connection (see Table 10). The researcher then further combined the common threads in these two themes into a super-theme. The super-theme that addressed the research question about veteran attachment to military careers is *loss of support and connections* (see Table 28). This super-theme was derived from the overall responses to research question two and reveals that the participants feel as though their basic needs are no longer being provided after years of support. This super-theme also addresses the participants concerns about psychological and emotional issues while dealing with feelings of separation anxiety.

Research Question Three

RQ 3) How does the attachment to their former military careers affect veterans' transition to the civilian workforce?

During the analysis of the participant responses, as coded segments were combined with like data, the following themes emerged: (a) desire for military structure and (b) resistance to the changing environment (see Table 15). The researcher then further combined the common threads in these two themes into a super-theme. The super-theme that addressed the research question about military attachment's impact on transition to new employment is *resistance to change* (see Table 28). This super-theme was derived from the overall responses to research question three and reveals that the

veterans said they knew they had to make a change, yet they often found themselves resistant to change and wanted to continue the status quo in an attempt to still maintain some form of military standards, discipline, or environment. Several participants indicated this resistance to change has had a negative impact on their civilian work life.

Research Question Four

RQ 4) How do veterans feel about the level of difficulty required to adapt to the civilian workforce?

During the analysis of the participant responses, as coded segments were combined with like data, the following themes emerged: (a) ask for support and assistance and (b) willingness to provide/assist with training (see Table 20). The researcher then further combined the common threads in these two themes into a super-theme. The super-theme that addressed the research question about veterans' difficulty adapting is *support and training* (see Table 28). This super-theme was derived from the overall responses to research question four and reveals that many of the veterans are at a loss when it comes to different areas, including MOS compatibility and the transition of job skills to the civilian workforce. This is an ongoing problem and can be addressed by providing training on how to translate military jobs, MOS, and experience into equitable civilian job skills.

Research Question Five

RQ 5) How can employers assist veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce?

During the analysis of the participant responses, as coded segments were combined with like data, the following themes emerged: (a) awareness of need for support and (b) allow time for adjustment (see Table 25). The researcher then further

combined the common threads in these two themes into a super-theme. The super-theme that addressed the research question about how employers can assist veterans is *Resources and Support* (see Table 28). This super-theme was derived from the overall responses to research question five and reveals that in addition to offering the necessary support or time off, the participants mentioned the civilian employer need to be aware that the veteran may come from deployment, combat, or need to deal with separation issues. It is important for the employers to realize that they are in a position to assist the veterans with the transition and can contribute to the level of personal fulfillment that may be required for the veterans to discover new direction.

Super-themes

A super-theme was successfully identified for each of the corresponding research questions; however, in addition to these super-themes, there were also additional prominent coded segments that need to be separately identified as they continued to appear across most of the research questions: *Camaraderie* and *Medical/PTSD* (see Table 28). Each of these seven super-themes will be further discussed in chapter five.

Table 28
Super-themes: combined themes and prominent coded segments

<i>Super-themes</i>	N	Percentage of Coded Segments
1 New Experiences and Struggles	201	16.81%
2 Loss of Support and Connections	245	20.48%
3 Desired Structure and Change Resistance	186	15.55%
4 Need for Help and Training	159	13.29%
5 Offer Support and Adjustment Time	165	13.80%
6 Camaraderie	134	11.20%
7 Medical/PTSD	106	8.86%

N = total number of coded segment responses per item

Summary of Chapter Four

Chapter four presented a detailed discussion of the results of the data collection and analysis undertaken. Twelve participants, which included six combat veterans and six non-combat veterans, completed a veteran’s screening questionnaire to assist with the screening process and to provide necessary demographic information. The participants then provided detailed responses to interview questions. This research was guided by five research questions and used 16 interview questions to further explore these topics. A judicious examination of the data was completed. Then, the researcher was able to identify coded segments that appeared most frequently or were most salient for each research question, combine similar segments into subtheme topics, aggregate the subthemes into themes, and combine the themes into a super-theme to address each of the

research questions while also paying attention to some of the more prominent coded segments from the interviews. A thorough discussion of the results is presented in chapter five.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This chapter includes the discussion of the study's findings. A summary of the main points of the research and findings provides an overview concerning the data collection, analysis, and results. An explanation of the findings and limitations of the study discovered during the research and data interpretation are discussed. In addition, implications of the findings and contribution to literature and research are addressed, followed by potential practical applications of the results from this study. Finally, recommendations for future research are outlined, and a brief chapter summary is provided.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they experience feelings of attachment and transition out of the military to the civilian workforce. This study focused on the veterans' feelings of attachment to the military way of life as they transitioned to the civilian workforce and how these feelings of attachment impacted veterans' behaviors during the transition period. Additionally, it posited how veterans' expectations produced conflict between veterans and civilian employers related to their performance in the civilian workplace. Finally, the study discussed practical suggestions for overcoming these issues in the context of the individual veteran, civilian employers, and the military.

Summary of the Findings

This study examined and addressed feelings of attachment experienced by recent veterans as they directly and indirectly impact veterans' performance and expectations during the transition to civilian employment. Studies have examined Transition Theory as it applies to military veterans, and the services made available for veterans are acknowledged in some of the literature; however, minimal research addresses the potential complications and impacts associated with the veteran's attachment to the military environment.

The overall results of this research demonstrate that Marine Corps veteran participants have feelings of attachment to the military. These feelings of attachment are present in combat and non-combat veterans, after serving four to eight years on active duty. Furthermore, this perceived level of attachment may have an adverse effect on veteran performance, commitment, and direction as they transition from the military to the civilian workforce.

At the beginning of this study, the researcher screened for combat versus non-combat Marines in an attempt to test if veterans' interview responses would be influenced by their personal experiences during their military careers. There were differences in combat versus non-combat personal experiences; however, the responses to the interview questions did not show a noticeable difference in the post-military experiences. The type of responses to the questions about transition and the level of attachment to the military or military way of life did not appear to be influenced by previous combat experience.

Hermeneutic phenomenology was used for this research in the hopes of gaining further insight and perspectives into the lived experiences of veterans that have

experienced the transition process from the military to the civilian workforce. Several participants shared their concern for the transition process and the difficulties that many of them had to endure during the process. All of the veterans mentioned the lack of connections found in the civilian world. Multiple themes emerged during the research analysis process. During the data collection process, 12 participants provided detailed responses to interview questions.

Combined Super-Themes

Five combined super-themes and two prominent coded segments were derived from the responses provided during the interview process: (1) *New Experiences and Struggles*; (2) *Loss of Support and Connections*; (3) *Resistance to Change*; (4) *Support and Training*; and (5) *Resources and Support*. In addition, two of the more prominent coded segments from the interviews continued to appear across all of the research questions (6) *Camaraderie* and (7) *Medical/PTSD* (see Figure 10).

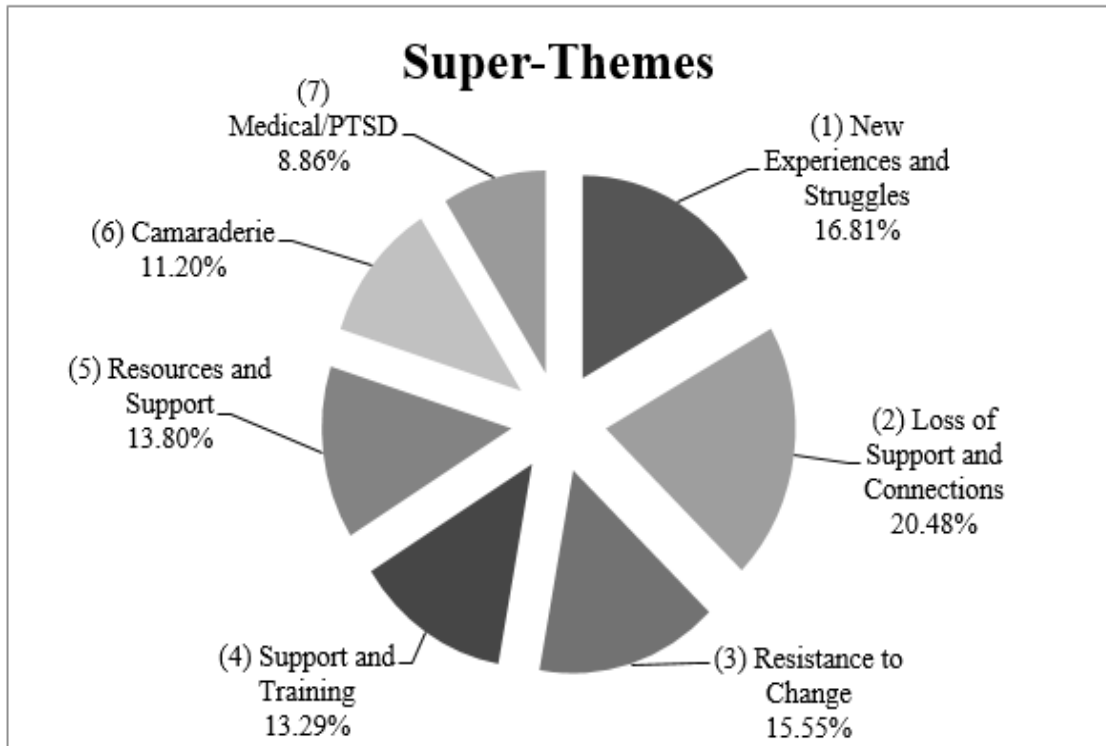


Figure 10. Super-themes: combined themes and prominent coded segments

New experiences and struggles. This combined super-theme is a combination of coded segments collected in response to interview questions that collectively answer research question one: what are the experiences of veterans as they transition to civilian employment? The veteran participants shared their personal experiences of their transition from the military to the civilian workforce. A small number (10.95%) shared experiences of positive feelings about their separation from the Marine Corps (see Table 3). The remaining majority shared feelings of having to deal with a less structured environment, personal feelings of alienation, and difficulty initially finding stable employment. Additionally, in response to this group of interview questions, some of the participants had problems or concerns with PTSD and medical issues during and after separation from the military, and all participants mentioned their concerns with loss of

camaraderie. The overall response to research question number one was that there will be a period of adjustment at a new civilian workplace. During this time of adjustment, the veteran will have new experiences. Some of the experiences will be rewarding and some will be struggles. All the participants agreed it was a learning experience that provided insight into the civilian workplace experience.

Loss of support and connections. This combined super-theme is a combination of coded segments collected in response to interview questions that collectively answer research question two: how do veterans experience perceived attachment to their former military careers? This question had the most responses (20.48%) concerning areas of attachment to the military (see Table 28). All of the participants said they experience pride from being a Marine, even the ones that had an unpleasant military experience. The participants shared multiple examples of basic needs no longer being provided after years of support. Several participants had concerns about psychological and emotional issues while dealing with feelings of separation anxiety. This appeared to be a concern with a lack of self-identification or inability to adapt due to the loss of the environment that had sustained them for many years. According to Maslow (1962), a person can achieve higher goals by finding a meaning to life that is important to him or her.

There were other problems mentioned surrounding the feeling of abandonment because the participants felt like the Marine Corps spent lots of time, money, resources, and effort to “program” the individuals on how to be a Marine, yet it appears as though the Marine Corps spends very little effort in the “deprogramming” back into civilian life. Also, because so many of the new recruits are directly out of high school and join the military at a young age, as they are getting ready to separate from the Marine Corps, they

feel as though they are not going “back” into the civilian workforce because they had not been there prior to joining the Marines. Some of the participants had problems or concerns with PTSD and medical issues during and concerns with loss of camaraderie.

Resistance to change. This combined super-theme is a combination of coded segments collected in response to interview questions that collectively answer research question three: how do veterans’ attachments to their former military careers affect their transition to the civilian workforce? Many of the veterans said they knew they had to make a change, yet they often found themselves resistant to change and trying to maintain the status quo in an attempt to still maintain some form of military standards, discipline, or environment. Several of the participants mentioned a level of difficulty in their civilian employment because it did not meet their expectation of the military environment to which they were accustomed. Several of the participants mentioned problems or concerns with PTSD, medical issues, and loss of camaraderie.

Most of the participants shared stories of pride while serving in the military and most of them voiced that they were happy to have moved on; however, all of them voiced a feeling of attachment to the military and noted that it affected their civilian workplace. In an attempt to maintain the military lifestyle, there is often a barrier to change that is created. One thing the veteran can do to attempt to move on past the feelings of attachment to the military is to attempt to embrace the new way of life and try to become part of the new culture at the civilian organization. Reaching out to others may not always be immediately effective; however, it may benefit both the organization and the veteran.

Support and training. This combined super-theme is a combination of coded segments collected in response to interview questions that collectively answer research question four: how do veterans feel about the level of difficulty required to adapt to the civilian workforce? Some of the participants found these questions easy to respond to and some found they had more reservations answering these interview questions. Initially the question asked how they felt the military prepared them for the civilian workforce. Then it immediately changed to be more directed at the participant giving advice on how to make things better or what could be done. The participants' reluctance to these questions seemed to be stemmed from not wanting to say something wrong or give bad advice. Advice for a newly separated veteran was more geared toward recommendations such as the veteran should be willing to ask for help, which was contrary to what several of the participants recalled from the military. Advice for civilian employers centered around being sensitive to the potential needs of the veterans. A large number of the participants (32.70%) stated the civilian employer should provide some form of training or re-training for the veterans, especially if there is confusion about how the MOS is going to transition to a civilian job (see Table 19). Also, the participants mentioned problems or concerns with PTSD, medical issues, and loss of camaraderie.

Many of the veterans are at a loss when it comes to MOS compatibility and the transition of job skills to the civilian workforce. This is an ongoing problem and can be addressed by providing training on how to translate military jobs, MOS, and experience into equitable civilian job skills. Also, other options are resume building, job training, and making connections with different veteran support agencies.

Resources and support. This combined super-theme is a combination of coded segments collected in response to interview questions that collectively answer research question five: how can employers assist veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce? The participants stated that civilian employers could help a veteran employee by providing necessary access to support the veteran may need. Many participants (30.91%) said it would be helpful to the veteran if there was more of a connection or awareness of veteran resources that may be required (see Table 24). The participants mentioned several situations in which ignorance of veteran support options, benefits, or programs was a detriment to them. In addition to offering the necessary support or time off, the participants mentioned the civilian employer should be aware that the veteran may be coming from deployment, combat, or need to deal with separation issues. It is important for the employers to realize that they are in a position to assist the veterans with the transition and can contribute to the level of personal fulfillment that may be required for the veterans to discover new direction. Each person is different, and motivation can lead people in different directions. For some people fulfillment can be achieved through creating, through sports, or within the corporate environment (Kenrick, Neuberg, Griskevicius, Becker, & Schaller, 2010). Therefore, it would be beneficial for the civilian employer to allow some adjustment time, because this period may be needed to better adjust to the civilian job. Several of the participants mentioned concerns about having to deal with issues related to PTSD, medical issues, and loss of camaraderie.

Support for the veterans seems to be an ongoing concern. This can be done through veteran recruiting efforts with outreach programs to schools, the military, and veteran support organizations. The civilian organization can create and sustain an

ongoing system with veterans by reaching out to them, incorporating them into their organization, and providing support in areas of need. These civilian employers have an opportunity to incorporate hardworking and dedicated veterans into their civilian organizations.

Camaraderie. In response to the interview questions for each of the research questions, all participants mentioned their concerns with loss of camaraderie. While camaraderie was not a combined super-theme, it was a topic that needs to be included as it was mentioned 134 different times. For so many veterans, the camaraderie is missed once it is gone. Military service is a transformative experience that leaves an indelible mark on all who serve. Once separated from the military way of life, many veterans find that they yearn for the structure, camaraderie, and discipline they experienced while in the military. These feelings of attachment to the military can make the transition back to civilian life difficult and pose a barrier to success in a civilian workplace.

The participants noted the effect of relationships they have left behind and the challenges that they have had to face in an attempt to try forge new bonds with those around them. Several of the participants mentioned their concerns regarding the loss of camaraderie from the military and not having the same level of camaraderie at their civilian job. One participant said he tries to find ways to reach out to other veterans in the hope of meeting a kindred spirit and to avoid isolation. As veterans may be in a stage of life that involves transitioning into something new and completely different, they may continue to try to seek the level of bonding and acceptance previously represented with the togetherness of the military. According to literature, the need for personal growth is present throughout a person's life (Maslow, 1962). This level of friendship and self-

identification will be a valuable tool to assist with areas of personal motivation and growth.

The civilian organization can also benefit from the awareness of concern regarding camaraderie. This will assist the company with the need to form a lasting bond, to contribute to the culture, and to create a mutual feeling of professional cohesion. With the loss of camaraderie, the veterans also have to struggle with the loss of purpose. When the military career requires that a person bonds with fellow Marines and to be constantly vigilant for surrounding Marines, this affects the role that is assumed during the military career. Once the requirement for this level of bonding is no longer present, there is the possibility of loss that may have to be addressed. The civilian organization can use this information to reach out to the veterans and to provide a sense of belonging. The opportunity for extracurricular activities and training that focus on bonding and camaraderie also exist. This may ultimately benefit the employer and help the veteran with his or her feelings of loss of camaraderie.

Medical/PTSD. In response to the interview questions for each of the research questions, some of the participants had problems or concerns with PTSD and medical issues during and after separation from the military. While medical/PTSD was not a combined super-theme, it was a topic that needs to be included as it was mentioned 106 different times. PTSD is a disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a traumatic or dangerous event. Many of the veterans interviewed claimed to have had some level of difficulty attempting to transition back into the civilian workplace due to issues with trauma and psychological issues such as PTSD.

Some of the participants shared stories of medical issues that may have prevented them from initially getting a civilian job such as hurt knees, injured backs, or some other physical ailment. One participant mentioned coping with the physical and mental scars from combat. Some of the participants shared stories of not wanting to tell anyone they had PTSD or depression because they did not want to be acknowledged as if they were “not normal.” The fact that PTSD is not something to be ashamed of still does not seem to be the common view in the civilian world. The concerns that surround medical or PTSD issues is something that some veterans may need help to manage. In an attempt to provide assistance with medical care, special accommodations, or awareness of external veteran benefits, the civilian workplace can improve recruitment and retention.

Limitations

Limitations are constraints outside of the control of the researcher and inherent to the actual study that could affect the generalizability of the results (Terrell, 2016, p.42). Some of the limitations of this study were sample size, the limited number of participants available that fulfilled the criteria of junior enlisted Marines that served on active duty for four to eight years (Creswell, 2013). The participants were solicited via a veteran’s research screening questionnaire. This was distributed to a network of former service members. The target participants were chosen from a list of former military colleagues and associates of the researcher. Recruiting reflected purposive sampling, with the intention of recruiting a variety of combat and non-combat veterans to explore the experiences of attachment and transition of Marine Corps veterans. The candidates that were selected had common military rank and time in service and had served in the Marine Corps. Homogeneous and criterion sampling are essential to a phenomenological

study; therefore, a small population was selected, and this decreased the generalizability of the data and conclusions (Creswell, 1998). Personal opinion is always prone to bias, which may reduce the validity of any data obtained or interpreted. Since qualitative studies use different aspects of data, the findings of this study were subject to interpretation by the researcher (Morse & Richards, 2002). Participants were volunteers and may have elected to participate because of their experience with the phenomenon of the study; therefore, it may have decreased the generalizability of the findings. Also, the researcher is a former enlisted, Marine Corps veteran with social and professional connections to some of the study's participants from which interview participants were recruited. This may lead to an inherent bias derived from the researcher's own background (Creswell, 2013). Further limitations included lack of substantial literature on Attachment Theory in the context of veterans.

Implications for Practice

Military service is a transformative experience that leaves an indelible mark on all who serve. Once separated from the military way of life, many veterans find that they yearn for the structure, camaraderie, and discipline they experienced while in the military. These feelings of attachment to the military can make the transition back to civilian life difficult and pose a barrier to success in a civilian workplace.

Unlike any potential differences that individuals may have or experiences they may encounter, veteran status is a unique category because it is obtained from completely volunteer-based organizations. People join for a variety of reasons and their tasks may fundamentally differ; however, they are undeniably support or service-based. The results of this study provide further insight into different aspects of what the veterans are

experiencing during the transition and how it relates directly and indirectly to a level of attachment to their former military careers.

An aspect that may often be overlooked is the need to fit into a social network and the desire to belong. A person will not get beyond self-actualization or growth until they reach the lower order (Maslow, 1953). It will be hard to advance until they have satisfied their social needs. Until those needs are met they will not grow, advance, or stay at any one particular place of employment. With proper training and inclusion, there will be a positive impact on intent to stay and potential commitment to an organization. There have been numerous studies on the transition of veterans from the military to civilian employment; however, this research provides a unique perspective on this phenomenon as it is also examined with the influence of veteran attachment to components of the military lifestyle.

Veterans. This study can provide veterans with insight into their own situations and possibly provide awareness of their motivations in different situations and the ability to adapt effectively in or out of the military. This information can help to assist the veteran with the transition out of the military to the civilian workforce by building greater awareness of the effects of feelings of attachment. The veterans need to be aware that there is going to be a different way of doing things outside of the military. While the military has traditionally provided a superior support system with great benefits and bonding, there will be an end to the military support system. The veteran must realize there will be a need for adjustment to the civilian workforce culture. Without the training and familiar support, transition out of the Marine Corps may be fraught with challenges

and discomfort. The veteran needs to be aware that transition means change, and he or she must be prepared for it.

Many veterans have transitioned out of the military. It can be done. However, some necessary adaptations will be required. The participants in this study shared stories about having to battle with feelings of loss and inadequacy. During the individual interviews, the veterans all shared feelings of pride from serving in the Marine Corps, all of them shared some form of attachment to the Marine Corps or the military way of life, and all of them shared regret that they were not better prepared for the issues they would face upon separating from the military.

The veterans should take this information into consideration when planning for life after the military. Many veterans face a period of unemployment during the transition out of the military. A potential solution with getting on track to a new civilian life after the military transition is to attempt to disassociate or separate from the military way of doing things. The veteran service member needs to keep in mind that life has changed, change is going to happen, and now he or she must focus on the future. Sadly, many veterans have lost their lives as a result of not being able to adjust to life out of the military. Veterans need to keep in mind that things will be much different, and that may not be such a bad thing. One thing the Marine Corps teaches all Marines is the ability to adapt and overcome any obstacle. The transition out of the military, the transition to the civilian workforce, and feelings of attachment to the military are all just more obstacles to overcome. Another option for veterans is to seek out other veterans to talk to and potentially share a bond. They should not be afraid to ask for help or seek assistance.

The information from this study is useful to veterans because it potentially provides a new sense of awareness.

Veteran Organizations. This information can also be used by organizations that support veterans in an attempt to have a greater awareness and understanding of the potential contributors to veteran behavior. The VA, American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign War (VFW) are leading contributors to the area of veteran affairs, medical benefits, and social activities. The use of these organizations can be useful tools in assisting and supporting veterans and the companies in which they are working. The information from this study can be used to better inform these organizations for training, management, and providing care. These veteran support organizations can provide better support by reaching out to veterans prior to separation from the military. They can also have active contact with civilian employers. The veteran support organizations can also assist with transition classes, adjustment training, and awareness of potential benefits and programs they may offer.

Civilian employers. The results of this study can be a valuable resource to civilian employers as well. Civilian employers must be aware that veteran employees may experience varying levels of attachment to military culture, and this attachment may then impact their engagement with and performance in their new civilian workplaces. This study's results support the work of Gilley (1985), who found that when an organization's members are experiencing attachment or abandonment from a prior organization, they may be reluctant to fully engage with and participate in their new organization. The results of this study can improve or create new practices to hire, engage, and develop veterans. Veterans come from a highly disciplined and structured

environment where they are expected to follow orders and adhere to established guidelines. Thus, it may be difficult for civilian employers to discern their unique but unexpressed talents and creativity. Given the correct supportive environment, the veterans are more likely to break out of their shells and both accomplish their necessary tasks and grow as members of the organization. Sometimes veterans are unaware of their own abilities until given the chance to operate with more autonomy. This study indicates, however, that to account for veterans' feelings of attachment, employers must find the middle ground between the rigid environment of the military and unstructured autonomy in order to help their veteran employees smoothly transition and flourish as members of the civilian workforce.

A concept that consistently emerged from the interviews conducted during this study was veterans' perception that their military skills either did not translate or were not valued in their civilian workplaces. This perception can create both feelings of isolation, because of perceived lack of value, and feelings of attachment to military culture where their job was clearly defined and skills valued and understood. Civilian employers can more carefully inventory veteran employees' occupational and soft skills to better utilize their veteran employees in the workplace. For example, service members are frequently cross-trained in other jobs, take on additional collateral duties, and train other military personnel. These are skills that may not be immediately evident in a veteran's MOS description. Additionally, military veterans frequently take on significant leadership responsibilities and solve complex problems. These soft skills also may not be immediately evident to a civilian employer. Recognizing and utilizing the skills of

veteran employees will help them feel valued in the organization and may reduce feelings of attachment that impede their transition to the civilian workforce.

This information can also be used as a tool to help with awareness of the veteran's potential attachment to the military when the civilian organization is preparing training for management, employees, and potential new hires. One option is to partner with military organizations to create mentoring and training programs that assist veterans to obtain a more realistic understanding of what to expect in the civilian workforce. An active mentoring program conducted in conjunction with military transition training may also help veterans develop the skills needed to find employment quickly and adjust more easily to a new civilian workplace. Further, professional development classes can be offered to assist veterans during their adjustment period. These classes could provide necessary training to help build civilian social skills, offer instruction on professional business vocabulary, and teach veterans how to do professional presentations and business interactions. Essentially the training period could be used as a bonding time for the veteran and organization and allow time for the veteran to form a new attachment to the civilian organization.

Military. The results of this study can benefit the military by providing more insight and awareness into the needs of the military personnel before, during, and after the separation process. The responses from the participants clearly indicated widespread perception that the military's transition process needs substantial improvement. While all of the participants had to attend TAP separation training prior to the transition out of the military, none of the veterans felt like they understood the importance or the purpose of the classes. Many of the participants found the TAP class to be a waste of time. Even

though the TAP classes could have provided useful information, the information was lost on unappreciative ears. Several participants related stories of command representatives and commanding officers treating the classes as a consumption of time and an inconvenience for those that had to attend.

Another concern expressed by participants was the speed and severity of military separation. Many Marines prior to separation are just returning from deployment, training exercises, or combat. The time provided for separation and transition is commonly insufficient. Participants commented that they had little time to conduct job searches in addition to making arrangements for daily life outside the military. The participants also noted the abruptness with which their military careers ended. One participant commented that Marines are about to leave a familiar and trusted environment where they have spent several years of their lives and are basically told to “suck it up” and “get out.” This type of transition is counterproductive and harmful to those about to leave the comfort of knowing most of their basic needs have been provided to enter an environment where they must fend for themselves. This abrupt separation from an organization that provided for their basic physical and social needs leaves veterans with a significant level of attachment to a familiar and supportive environment where they are no longer welcome. In essence, the Marine Corps spends so much time and money training Marines on how to survive in any environment while in the military, but very little time and effort on how to survive out of the military.

The military can help by substantially reforming its transition assistance program. Gilley (1985) confirmed the need for this by noting that an organization needs to recognize the negative effects of abandonment on the members and accept the

responsibility of helping those separated adjust. The military can start instilling in its leadership at all ranks a sense of importance and value surrounding the transition classes. Further, the military can provide transitioning service members with a longer period of preparation for separation to assist in building employment skills and job searching. The transition programs can also do a better job at helping veterans to obtain a more realistic view about what they are going to face in the civilian workforce. More emphasis should be put on training programs for resume writing, job interview skills, and professional civilian attire. Another option is to set up an active mentor program to work with civilian employers, training facilities, and programs to help current Marines and veterans succeed in their transitions.

Finally, the military can take steps to address feelings of attachment by doing more to help veterans immediately after separation. One participant observed that the Marine Corps' attitude towards him after he separated was, "see ya." The abruptness of separation from military life heightens the loss of camaraderie and feelings of attachment and may explain the distinct veteran culture that develops post-separation. Rather than trust veterans' organizations like the VA or American Legion to take care of their cast-offs, the military can acknowledge these feelings of attachment and find ways to creatively re-engage recent veterans in the military community and culture to smooth their transition and adaptation to the civilian life and workforce.

Human Resource Development (HRD). HRD is the framework for helping employees develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and abilities. A key component is to assist the employee with company orientation in an attempt to be acclimated and comfortable within the new working environment. Immersion within the

organization will build confidence in the veteran. Additional training may be needed to assist with the transition of the veteran that is still attached to an environment with a higher expectation of an oppressive leadership style. They may not have the morale or motivation to adapt their military training and skills into the civilian workplace for fear of failure, disappointment, or need for guidance. In addition, there is the potential for a disconnect between what they can do, what they think they can do, and the capacity to be able to accomplish different goals. Acknowledging the necessary training can also help employers with recruitment of the veterans. Any attempt to address these issues or concerns will help contribute to the social and cultural environments of the civilian workplace.

People react differently to situations and have varying approaches to getting things done. Therefore, it is important for an organization to provide necessary training and support in an attempt to be more inclusive with the veterans and their skills that are brought from the military. Many times, the veterans are able to accomplish more than expected. This can be seen by the veteran's ability to coordinate a situation or handle task completion with little or no supervision. Many of the seemingly inherent leadership skills that are taken for granted in the military can, with proper guidance and assistance, be nurtured into valuable management skills such as planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. This study can contribute to the civilian organization in the areas of retention and commitment to a company and provide awareness or insight into the need for training and development of the veterans.

Recommendations for Researchers

The results of this study can provide insight into previously unexplored areas of the veteran transition and attachment. This information can now be used to create or enhance existing veteran training and awareness programs. This study was done as a qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study that allowed for the identification of emerging themes. Further qualitative research into this phenomenon may reveal deeper insights and conclusions based on different individual lived experiences of participants. Qualitative research can also be conducted measure veterans' feelings of attachment and transition experiences and explore the intersection of the two theories.

Future research. This research focused on junior enlisted Marine veterans that served on active duty for four to eight years. A recommendation for additional studies would be to interview participants with different screening qualifications. The study could be extended or changed to include veterans that have transitioned from the different branch of services, different years of service, different ranks, and retirees. Future studies could be completed with different demographic groups of veterans that focus on variables such as gender, religion, ethnicity, place of origin, disability status, sexual identity and gender expression, and subcultures. Future HRD research could also compare the transitions of veterans into specific types of civilian employment. Additional studies could expand beyond civilian employment to include how feelings of attachment affect transition into higher education. Further research in this area may allow for comparison of the levels of attachment for different groups of veterans and the different ways those feelings affect each group's transition out of the military to the civilian workforce.

Contribution to literature. This study contributes to the current body of literature and research by bringing together the concepts of Transition Theory, Attachment Theory, and veteran transition out of the military and to the civilian workplace. Other studies have been done on each of these topics; however, the unique contribution of this study is the examination of attachment, during the transition process. In addition to veterans and the attachment to the military, this study can broadly apply to non-veteran, civilian individuals as a demonstration of the level of potential attachment to a previous job or organization that can impact future performance or employment as individuals leave one organization during the transition period to a new organization.

Summary of the Chapter

Chapter five began with a brief overview and a restatement of this study's purpose. The discussion answered the study's research questions through combined super-theme results derived from the data interpretation associated with the experiences of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they experience feelings of attachment and transition out of the military to the civilian workforce. Limitations of the study were outlined, and implications of the findings for veterans, civilian employers, the military, and the HRD field were discussed. This study also discussed recommendations for future research. Finally, the contributes to the current body of literature and research were provided along with a brief chapter summary.

The overall results of this research demonstrated that the Marine Corps veteran participants had feelings of attachment to the military that could have adverse effects on veteran performance, commitment, and direction during the transition from the military

to the civilian workforce. The lessons gleaned from this research may help both civilian employers and the military ensure that the brave men and women who wear our country's uniforms do not feel lost and abandoned as they close the active duty chapter of their lives and begin a new one in the civilian workforce. In addition to veterans and the attachment to the military, this study can broadly apply to non-veteran, civilian individuals as a demonstration of the level of potential attachment to a previous job or organization that can impact future performance or employment as individuals transition from one organization to a new organization.

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Appendix A

The University of Texas at Tyler Institutional Review Board (IRB)

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

EXPEDITED and EXEMPT RESEARCH APPLICATION

IRB: Sp2018-73 Approved by: G Duke Date: <i>February 1, 2018</i>
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Attach (electronically) to gduke@uttyler.edu with this application, the following:

- Written consent form using the UT Tyler Consent Template unless a waiver of written informed consent is requested
- Signature page of Thesis or Dissertation Committee members showing proposal approval for graduate students
- Brief research proposal that outlines background and significance, research design, research questions/hypotheses, data collection instruments and related information, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures. **Most of this can be copied and pasted to relevant parts of the application but please keep Background & Significance brief for the application.**
- CITI certifications for PI, co-investigators, and research assistants participating in recruitment, data collection, data analysis, or, if they have any exposure to identifiable data (if training has not been completed at UT Tyler within a 3-year period of time)
- Tool/instrument/survey; if copyright or other issues prohibit electronic form, submit one hard copy

COMPLETE ALL ITEMS TO AVOID DELAY IN IRB APPROVAL

DATE: *01/23/2018*

Principal Investigator	<i>Sanford,</i> <i>Kevin</i> <i>R.</i> <small>(Last) (First) (MI)</small>
PI Title and Credentials	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Professor <input type="checkbox"/> Professor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Faculty Sponsor Name and Email if PI is Student	<i>Jerry W. Gilley Ed. D.</i> <i>jgilley@uttyler.edu</i>
PI Phone	<i>(760) 473-9187</i>
PI Email	<i>Ksanford4@patriots.uttyler.edu</i>

Appendix A (Continued)

2

Co-Investigator(s)	Click here to enter text.
Co-Investigator(s) Email and Telephone	
Secondary Contact Person in Absence of PI	
Secondary Contact Person's Telephone and Email	Phone: Email:
Title of Proposed Research	<i>A Phenomenological Study of Junior Enlisted Marine Corps Veterans' Career Transition and Organizational Attachment: from the Military to Civilian Work Environment</i>
Source of Funding	<input type="checkbox"/> NIH <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Industry <input type="checkbox"/> Other Federal (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <i>Personally Funded</i>

1. Designate the category that qualifies this proposal for what you believe will be either exempt or expedited review (see UT Tyler Exempt (page 8) and Expedited Categories (page 9) at the end of this application) and justify this designation by responding to the statements below each category

Category # *7, expedited*

Information Required for Justification (See specific information under each category)
Qualitative research

2. For proposals involving Personal Health Information (PHI) data: If this is a retrospective chart review (Category 5) (health records research), or, data involves review of PHI, refer to the IRB's HIPAA policies and procedures in the IRB Handbook and complete any appropriate forms. All can be located on the UT Tyler IRB site: <http://www.uttyler.edu/research/compliance/irb/>

2a. Does this protocol include the use of PHI? Yes No

NOTE: *If the protocol includes the use of PHI, refer to the IRB Handbook on HIPAA policies and relevant forms that must be completed before IRB approval can be obtained.*

3. **Clearly Stated Purpose Of Study and Design:**

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they address feelings of attachment and transition out of the military and into the civilian workforce. The study will focus on the veterans' feelings of attachment to the military way of life as they transition to the civilian workforce and how these feelings of attachment impact veterans' behaviors during the transition period.

The research design is a hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative case study conducted via 8-12 semi-structured interviews with former junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans (serving 4-8 years). The interviews will be conducted face-to-face in person. All interviews will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Data will be analyzed using NVivo software and hand-coding.

Appendix A (Continued)

3

4. Research Questions and/or Hypotheses, if applicable:

- RQ 1) What are the experiences of veterans (junior enlisted Marine Corps) as they transition to civilian employment?
- RQ 2) How do veterans experience perceived attachment to their former military careers?
- RQ 3) How does the attachment to their former military careers affect veterans' transition to the civilian workforce?
- RQ 4) How do veterans feel about the level of difficulty required to adapt to the civilian workforce?
- RQ 4) How can employers assist veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce?

5. Brief Background and Significance of Study (include enough information and citations to indicate literature gaps and why it is important to do this study):

Background to the Problem

The inception of the Global War on Terror (GWOT) as a response to the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States has fundamentally transformed the United States military and created a substantial new generation of veterans. While the U.S. Census Bureau (2011) reports that there are approximately 22 million veterans in the United States, 1.6 million of those served directly or indirectly in operations that began in 2001. The majority of veterans that served in the post-9/11 period were predominantly in support of combat operations: Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation New Dawn (OND) (Prosek & Holm, 2014). With almost seventeen years of sustained military operations around the world, the GWOT is now the United States' longest war. In the wake of this war, Wolfe (2012) observed that approximately 200,000 service members will transition out of the military each year. As a result of the growing number of service members that have separated, veterans make up approximately 10% of the total U.S. population over the age of 17 years (Garvey-Wilson, Messer, & Hoge, 2009).

As military service members separate from their military service obligation and transition to the civilian workforce, they experience numerous challenges leaving behind the culture of the military and adapting to the civilian way of life (Dexter, 2016; Minnis, 2014). High unemployment and poor economic conditions may prevent veterans from seeking jobs based on the application of their previous skills and experiences; thus, many are forced to take low pay entry-level positions (Sargent, 2014). In many cases, military veterans experience separation anxiety and feelings of attachment toward their former military culture, which may lead to depression and a sense of inadequacy (Brignone et al., 2017). Civilian employers may intensify these feelings, as they often do not provide the same level of engagement or expectation provided by the military (Dexter, 2016; Stone, 2016). As a result of personal challenges and perceived deficiencies of the civilian workplace, these veterans, who were once accustomed to responsibilities, duties, and obligations, are now struggling to transition into the civilian workforce (Stone, 2016).

This subset of junior enlisted veterans was chosen because a vast majority of veterans entering the civilian workforce are junior enlisted (Pyle, Haddock, Poston, Bray, & Williams, 2007) who served approximately four to eight years or the equivalent of one to two terms of enlistment (Martorell, Miller, Daugherty, & Borgschulte, 2014). This study seeks to explain the intersection of veterans' struggles with both transition and feelings of attachment to the military lifestyle so that the military, veterans, and civilian employers can develop strategies to ease the transitions of the current generation of warriors back to civilian life and foster success in the workplace.

Statement of the Problem

Military service is a transformative experience that leaves an indelible mark on all who serve. Once separated from the military way of life, many veterans find that they yearn for the structure, camaraderie, and discipline they experienced while in the military. These feelings of attachment to the military can make the transition back to civilian life difficult and pose a barrier to success in a civilian workplace.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This study will be based on two theoretical foundations found in the literature, *Attachment Theory* (Bretherton, 1992) and *Transition Theory* (Schlossberg, 1981), as they impact veterans *transitioning out of the military* and *transitioning into the civilian workforce*. *Attachment Theory* is a set of concepts that explain the emergence of emotional bonds and the way these bonds affect behaviors and emotions in different areas of life; includes attachment in adult relationships, friendships, emotional bonds, and romantic relationships. *Transition Theory*, Schlossberg (1981) defined a transition as any event, or non-event that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles. By reviewing research on these theories, this study will describe the uncertainties and misconceptions about the effects of Attachment Theory and Transition Theory on veterans transitioning out of the military and into the civilian workforce. The study will add to the literature by examining Attachment Theory and Transition Theory as they apply to military veterans.

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6. **Target Population:**

a. **Ages:** *Adults, 18 years of age or older*

b. **Gender:** *Male and female*

Explain below if either gender is to be purposely excluded.

NA

c. **Are all racial and ethnic groups included in general recruitment?** Yes No

Explain below if a racial or ethnic group is to be purposely excluded.

NA

d. **Number of Anticipated Participants with Justification:**

8-12 anticipated participants; this is a qualitative study, interviews will be conducted until the point of saturation has been reached. At the point of saturation, the researcher can stop gathering data, because any additional data collected will not reveal new information (Charmaz, 2014). The interviews will be conducted using a series of interview questions designed to address issues of transition out of the military, attachment to the military, transition to the civilian workforce, and assistance employers and organizations can provide to support veterans who struggle with attachment and promote their success. The number of participants and data collected will be important for gathering of information and data interpretation for the study. Recruiting will reflect purposive sampling, with the intention of recruiting a variety of combat and non-combat veterans to explore the experiences of attachment and transition of Marine Corps veterans. The experiences and perspectives of the former military members can provide insight regarding career development and the transition process after experiencing many years of military comradery, support, and culture (Minnis, 2014).

e. **Inclusion Criteria for Sample Eligibility:** *Junior enlisted Marines that served four to eight years. Because this study will focus on the transition from the military to the civilian workforce, an additional requirement for participation will be some level of civilian workforce experience post-military enlistment.*

Note: *Any study involving prisoners requires a full board review, and may not be approved under expedited review.*

7. **Explain the locations or settings for (a) sample recruitment and (b) data collection:**

a. **In what settings (e.g., specific classroom, organizational meetings, church, clinics, etc.) will you do sample recruitment?**

The participants will be solicited via a veteran's research screening questionnaire. This will be distributed to a network of former service members. The target participants are former personal military colleagues and associates of the PI.

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Appendix A (Continued)

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b. In what settings will you collect your data?

The interview setting will take place wherever the participant feels comfortable, whether at their office location, in their home, or a mutually agreed upon social setting. For participants for whom it is not possible to meet in person, the interview can be conducted via Zoom.

8. Prior to sample recruitment and data collection, who will you first obtain permission to do the recruitment and data collections. For example, if sample recruitment and/or data collection will occur in settings other than public settings, you may need permission to do this. For example, in business organizations, you will need approval from a manager or owner of the business; in academic settings, you may need permission of course faculty to recruit their students; in school districts, you may need permission from a superintendent, principle and/or teachers.

Permission from participants will be obtained via a written informed consent form, where the title, purpose, description, risks, and benefits of the study are described. Adult participants will sign to consent to be included in the study and will be informed of the confidential nature of the study and its data, as well as the process for protection of the data.

9. Who will be recruiting the sample (humans, records, etc.)? This could be the PI or another person who is asked by the PI to recruit.

The PI will recruit participants based on responses to the emailed questionnaire to determine if the participants meet the criteria of the study and their desire to participate in the study and to gain insight from the participants themselves on who might have relevant experiences for the research topic.

10. How will recruitment be done? For example, will recruitment be done by email (if so, indicate how email addresses are obtained), face to face, etc.?

Recruitment will be done by email primarily. Email addresses are available through a list of contacts obtained during prior military association with the PI.

- a. Copy and paste text, verbal scripts, graphics, pictures, etc. below from any flyers, ads, letters etc. that are used for recruitment of participants. This will be what will be said in emails, etc. to potential participants as the general announcement for recruitment.

NOTE: This is never an "N/A" option. You may also add these as separate attachments and indicate so in space below.

Appendix A (Continued)

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Initial E-mail to Potential Participants

Subject: Attention Veterans! Please assist with a veteran study of transition and attachment

Dear Veteran:

Hello, I am a Ph.D. student/candidate working on a research project at The University of Texas at Tyler. I am doing a study to explain the intersection of veterans' struggles with both transition and feelings of attachment to the military lifestyle so that the military, veterans, and civilian employers can develop strategies to ease the transitions of the current generation of warriors back to civilian life and foster success in the workplace.

I am looking for enlisted veterans to participate in this study who have had some form of employment, after leaving the military and may be willing to participate in a 45-60 minute face-to-face recorded interview.

To protect your confidentiality, your responses and contact information will not be made public. Only a summary of the data gathered during this study will be shared with The University of Texas at Tyler representatives and will be used for this dissertation and possible other scholarly purposes, such as future presentations and publications.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the veteran screening questionnaire to determine if you meet the criteria for this study.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

(Principal Investigator)

11. Informed Consent

Prospective research ordinarily requires written informed consent. Inclusion of children (under 18 years) requires permission of at least one parent AND the assent of the child (refer to UT Tyler's Policy on Informed Consent of Children).

If written consent is to be used, terminology must be about the 8th grade level, or as appropriate for the accurate understanding of the participant or guardian.

If there are questions about the literacy or cognitive level of potential participants, there must be evidence that the participant is able to verbalize basic information about the research, their role, time commitment, risks, and the voluntary nature of participating and/or ceasing participation with no adverse consequences.

Please use the templates posted under the IRB forms as a guide, and attach as a separate document with the application submission.

Do not copy and paste from this document into consent form. Use simple and easy to understand terminology written at no higher than 8th grade level.

12. If you are requiring signed consents, skip #12 and #13 and move to Item #14.

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Appendix A (Continued)

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This section ONLY for those requesting a waiver or alteration of SIGNED and written informed consent:

All four criteria must be met in order to NOT have signed written informed consents as a requirement for your study.

In other words, you must answer "yes" to all four of the criteria below in order to NOT have written and signed informed consents.

If you are requesting a waiver of written and signed informed consent, Indicate "yes" if the statement is true about your proposed research:

1. The research involves no more than minimal risk to the subjects Yes No
2. The waiver or alteration will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of the subjects
 Yes No
3. The research could not practicably be carried out without the waiver or alteration,
 Yes No **AND**
4. Whenever appropriate, the subjects will be provided with additional pertinent information after participation Yes No.

13. When prospective informed consent is waived, explain how you will obtain permission to use participant's data. If no permission is planned, please explain your rationale.

Any online survey should always present general purpose of the research, risks, benefits, and PI contact information, and then participant should have the options presented to "I agree" or "I do not agree" to participate in the research. If they select "I do not agree" the survey should be set up so that the participant exits out and has no access to the survey.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

14. Detailed Data Collection Procedures **ATTENTION:** Be very specific for this item.

Specify who, what, when, where, how, duration type of information for your procedures. Write this section as if you were giving instructions to another person not familiar with your study. Please bullet information if possible.

- Prior to screening potential applicants or participants, approval must be acquired by completing all necessary Institutional Review Board (IRB) forms from The University of Texas at Tyler. Once authorization has been obtained to move forward with research and data collection, only then will the researcher start selecting potential participants to complete the screening questionnaire and move forward with the study.
- Data will then be collected through an interview process that will focus on the veterans and their personal stories and experiences. A list of guiding questions will be used in an effort to solicit the veterans' personal insights (Merriam, 2009).

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Appendix A (Continued)

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The semi-structured interviews will continue with the Interview Guide (attached) as a template for the questions used to collect data from the participants.

- Additionally, personal observations and a field note journal will be kept to log elements such as visual observations, thoughts, emotions, and reactions. The journal will also assist in recording nonverbal components which may contribute to the interview and data being collected. The use of the field note journal is encouraged in qualitative research to record data and assist in the analysis of information collected (Creswell, 2013; Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2005; Mulhall, 2003; Patton, 2015).
- Once individuals are recruited and determined to meet the requirements for participation in the main study, face-to-face interviews will be scheduled one at a time, allowing approximately 45 – 60 minutes per interview. This will provide sufficient time to complete the interview questions and to take time to annotate any necessary notes deemed relevant during the interview process. An interview will be performed with each of the selected voluntary participants. Each interview will be recorded and subsequently transcribed. Once the transcripts are complete, the interviewer and participant will review the transcripts for completeness and accuracy of information before continuing with the data analysis.
- Data will be collected through a one-hour semi-structured, face-to-face interview conducted one-on-one. Interviews will be scheduled at the participants' convenience. The interview protocol will include a semi-structured line of questioning and extemporaneous follow up questions specific to each interview when needed to probe or explore themes and lived experiences.
- Veterans will be asked the same set of interview questions that will focus on their experiences during and after the military. The storytelling aspects of the interview will provide a way for the participants to personally and subjectively explore experiences as they relate to the social and cultural environments in which they occurred (Cohen & Mallon, 2001). This type of interaction will allow for the participants to provide a more realistic personal reflection of their own personal truths as they experienced it.
- All interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed and coded. In order to increase reliability and control for variable interference by the researcher, data will be hand-coded, as well as analyzed in NVivo software to provide validation of researcher findings.

15. Data Analysis Procedures:

- With permission from each of the participants, the interviews will be conducted in person and recorded using a digital recorder. All audio recordings will then be immediately transcribed and evaluated. The transcripts will be examined, coded, and interpreted to identify reoccurring themes from the interview (Boyatzis, 1998). The researcher will then use *NVivo* to increase the accuracy of the data analysis method (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). It is designed to help organize, examine, and find insights in qualitative data. Next, codes will be developed using *NVivo* and the transcribed, recorded interviews (Creswell, 2014).
- *NVivo*, version 11.4.1 will be used to organize data once the recorded interview is transcribed and coded. *NVivo* is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package produced by QSR International. It has been designed for qualitative researchers working with rich text-based information, where levels of analysis of data are required.
- Data interpretation and analysis will begin after the first interview by conducting a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis. To increase legitimacy, the researcher will use triangulation and member checks will be conducted to ensure validity (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011; Mathison, 1988). To assist with evaluations and cross-checking, the researcher will collect data in three ways: observations, interviews, and field notes (Merriam, 2009).
- The field note journal and transcriptions will be combined after being checked for accuracy. The next step in the process is to read over the transcripts and assign numbers to each of the lines of data. The assigned line numbers can then be used to reference information from the field note journal. It will also be necessary to indicate lines that are questions, so that responses will be differentiated. This process of line identification and numbering will be done for each interview, ensuring precision and reliability. Then the information will be analyzed, looking at specific statements and develop meaning of the description (Creswell, 2014).

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Appendix A (Continued)

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- The next step will be an attempt to interpret the information collected and coded. After identifying common themes and reoccurring topics, the coded information will go through the process of combining and separating different strands of information to identify themes in the data. This will also allow for areas deemed important to have some creative flexibility to be assigned and reassigned if necessary into more prominent apparent themes or grouped areas assigned by similar meanings (Creswell, 2013).
- Once the more prominent themes have been addressed and identified, it is possible to begin to examine some of the less frequent themes and contrast or combine, if possible. It will then be necessary to focus on the more common and potentially significant themes. To check reliability, the researcher will document procedures, check transcripts for mistakes, ensure code drift does not occur, and maintain fidelity with established codes.

16. Risks and benefits of this research to the subjects and/or society

Risks: Potential Risks of this study may include minimal areas of stress when discussing experiences and emotions associated with sharing stories related to previous military experience and potentially negative memories. Should a participant become distressed, help will be provided. The PI will ask the participant if they feel comfortable with continuing the interview and remind the participants they can discontinue this interview at any time, with no consequences or hard feelings. If a participant demonstrates signs of distress, the interviewer will ask if they would like to terminate the interview or re-schedule for a later time.

Benefits (benefits of your research to society in general): New literature will be added to the topic of veterans' career transition and organizational attachment for both researchers and practitioners. This study will provide insight about the intersection of veterans' struggles with both transition and feelings of attachment to the military lifestyle so that the military, veterans, and civilian employers can develop strategies to ease the transitions of the current generation of warriors back to civilian life and foster success in the workplace.

17. Identifiability of data or specimens: Will the specimens or data be identifiable?

(NOTE: Any time code numbers are used, or signed consent forms are used, there is ALWAYS potential identifiability of data).

Yes No If yes, complete item 17a

- 17a. State the type of identification, direct or indirect, on any specimens or data when they are made available to your study team: Participant names will be the direct identifier in the veteran's research screening questionnaire and on the informed consent forms. Then any subsequent reference will be identified by pseudo names which will be used as an indirect identifier to identify the participants.

Direct Identifiers include subject name, address, social security, etc.

Indirect Identifiers include any number that could be used by the investigator or the source providing the data/specimens to identify a subject, e.g., pathology tracking number, medical record number, sequential or random code number)

Appendix A (Continued)

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18. **Confidentiality and Protection of Data:** Specify how confidentiality will be secured and maintained for research data

For example, locked in file cabinet in office; on password protected computer, location(s) of computer; identifiers and signed consent forms are kept locked in separate entity from data, etc.).

All electronic research data will be stored on a password protected computer. Additionally, all veteran research screen questionnaires and signed consent forms will be secured in a locked drawer by the PI.

19. **Access to Data:** Specify faculty and staff (members of the study team) permitted to have access to the study data.

Due to the nature of this research, the PI and his dissertation committee chair, Dr. Jerry Gilley will also have access to the data collected for this study.

20. **Have all individuals who have access to data been educated about human subject ethics and confidentiality measures?** (NOTE: This is responsibility of PI, and certificates must be attached to IRB application)

Yes No

21. **If data is on a laptop, acknowledge that the laptop will never be in an unsecure location where theft is possible (e.g., in a locked car)**

Data stored on a laptop will never be in an unsecure location where theft is possible.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Signature indicates agreement by the PI to abide by UT Tyler IRB policies and procedures in the UT Tyler Handbook and the Federal Wide Assurance, to the obligations as stated in the "Responsibilities of the Principal Investigator" and to use universal precautions with potential exposure to specimens.

Kevin R. Sanford

01/23/2017

Principal Investigator Signature
Please print name or affix electronic signature.
Electronic submission of this
form by PI indicates signature

Date

Appendix B

Interview Guide

- IQ 1) Describe how you felt when you separated from the military.
- IQ 2) Tell me about your experience adapting to your first job after the military.
- IQ 3) Tell me a story about the transition to your first job after the military.
- IQ 4) What did you miss about the military after you separated?
- IQ 5) How would you describe your feelings about your military service?
- IQ 6) How did you feel about your military service after working in the civilian workforce?
- IQ 7) Tell me about some of the jobs you've held since separating from the military.
- IQ 8) How is your civilian workplace different than your military workplace?
- IQ 9) How does your experience in your civilian job compare to your experience in the military?
- IQ 10) Describe an experience you had that showed a contrast between your civilian employment and military career.
- IQ 11) How do you feel the military prepared you for the civilian workforce?
- IQ 12) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, what do you want other veterans to know about the transition to the civilian workforce?
- IQ 13) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, what do you want civilian employers to know about employing a recent veteran?
- IQ 14) Based on your experiences in the civilian workforce, how do you think the military could better prepare veterans for the transition to the civilian workforce?

Appendix B (Continued)

IQ 15) Based on your experiences, how can civilian employers help veterans succeed in the civilian workforce?

IQ 16) Is there something your civilian employer could have done to make your transition into the workforce easier?

Appendix C

Initial E-mail to Potential Participants

Dear Veteran:

Hello, I am a Ph.D. student/candidate working on a research project at The University of Texas at Tyler. I am doing a study to explain the intersection of veterans' struggles with both transition and feelings of attachment to the military lifestyle so that the military, veterans, and civilian employers can develop strategies to ease the transitions of the current generation of warriors back to civilian life and foster success in the workplace.

I am looking for enlisted veterans to participate in this study who have had some form of employment, after leaving the military and may be willing to participate in a 45-60 minute face-to-face recorded interview.

To protect your confidentiality, your responses and contact information will not be made public. Only a summary of the data gathered during this study will be shared with The University of Texas at Tyler representatives and will only be used for scholarly purposes.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the veteran screening questionnaire to determine if you meet the criteria for this study.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Kevin

Kevin Sanford, PhD Candidate
The University of Texas at Tyler
College of Business & Technology
KSanford4@patriots.uttyler.edu

Appendix D

Follow-up E-mail to Notify Selected Participants

Dear Veteran:

Thank you for taking the time to complete the veterans screening questionnaire. I am happy to inform you that you have been selected to further participate in a research project to explain the intersection of veterans' struggles with both transition and feelings of attachment to the military lifestyle so that the military, veterans, and civilian employers can develop strategies to ease the transitions of the current generation of warriors back to civilian life and foster success in the workplace. Next, we need to set up a face-to-face interview for approximately 45-60 minutes. If you would still like to participate, please let me know dates and times you will be available within the next three weeks.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kevin

Kevin Sanford, PhD Candidate
The University of Texas at Tyler
College of Business & Technology
KSanford4@patriots.uttyler.edu

Appendix E

Veterans Research Screening Questionnaire

The following questionnaire will be used as a screening tool for potential participants in a study about veterans' transition from the military to civilian employment. The first step is to make sure you understand the purpose and to seek your consent to participate. This is a research project conducted to fulfill the dissertation requirement at The University of Texas at Tyler.

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you initially decide to not participate in this research questionnaire, you may withdraw your consent at any time. If you choose to participate, you may be contacted for further questions and to participate in a research interview.

The procedure involves completing the questionnaire with multiple choice questions about you and your military service. You are being asked to participate in a survey that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. After you read each question, select the answer that best corresponds to your response.

To protect your confidentiality, your responses and contact information will not be made public. The researcher anticipates no side effects or risks associated with your participation in this study. Only a summary of the data gathered during this study will be shared with The University of Texas at Tyler representatives and will only be used for scholarly purposes.

Please answer the following questions about your military experience. All information provided will be kept confidential.

1. Are you currently serving in the U.S. military? ___yes ___no

2. Are you a former active duty U.S. Marine Corps veteran? ___yes ___no

Approximately how long did you serve on active duty? ___years ___months

Were you deployed to a combat area? ___yes ___no

3. What was the highest rank you achieved in the U.S. military?

___E-1 ___E-2 ___E-3 ___E-4 ___E-5 ___E-6 ___E-7 ___E-8 ___E-9 ___Officer/WO

4. Have you had any civilian employment after leaving active duty? ___yes ___no

5. Are you currently employed? ___yes ___no

Appendix E (Continued)

6. What industry do you currently work in?

Educational Entertainment Finance Government

Manufacturing Medical Professional Service other

Demographics

Demographics of the potential participant

7. What is your age? 18-25 years 26-30 years 31-35 years 36+ years

8. What is your gender? male female

9. What is your race/ethnicity?

American Indian/Alaskan Native

Asian / Pacific Islander

Black / African American

Hispanic

White / Caucasian

Other

10. What is the highest level of school you have completed?

High school/GED Some College-No Degree College Degree

11. If you are selected would you be willing to participate in a 45-60 minute interview about your military experience? yes no

If you are willing to participate, please include your name and contact information.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Thank you for your assistance. If you have questions or concerns about this questionnaire, please contact me via email at KSanford4@patriots.utt Tyler.edu.

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE VIA EMAIL OR MAIL TO:

Kevin Sanford, PhD Candidate

485 East Altadena Drive

Altadena, CA 91001

KSanford4@patriots.utt Tyler.edu

Thank You!

Appendix F

Screening Questionnaire Results

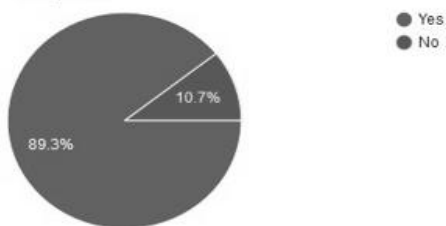
Are you currently serving in the military?

75 responses



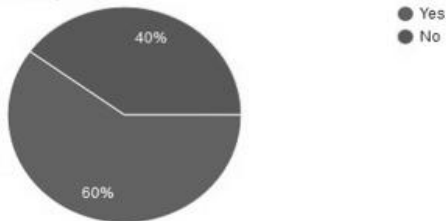
Are you a former active duty Marine?

75 responses



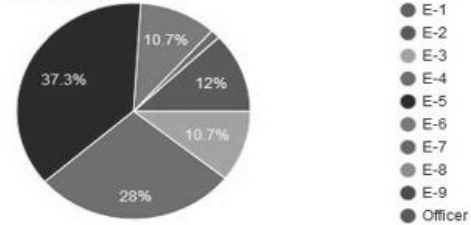
Were you deployed to a combat area?

75 responses



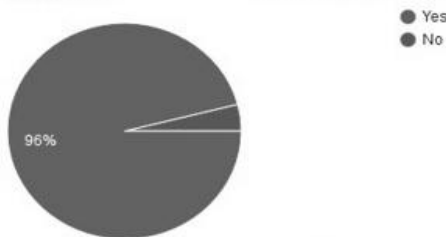
What was the highest rank you achieved?

75 responses



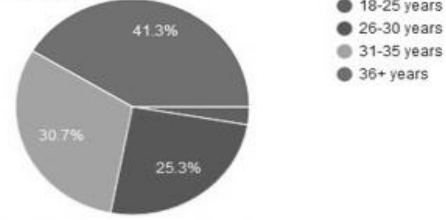
Have you had any civilian employment after active duty?

75 responses



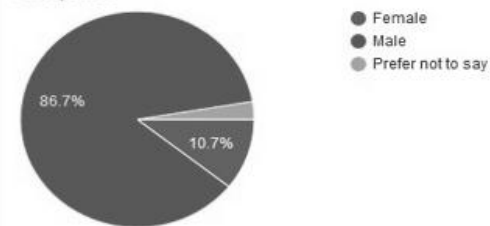
What is your age?

75 responses



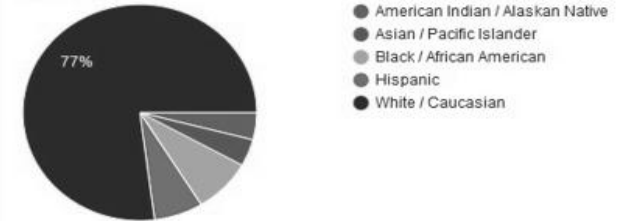
What is your gender?

75 responses



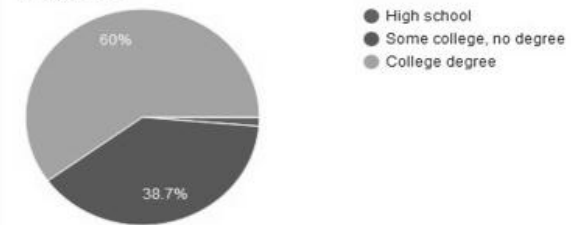
What is your race/ethnicity?

74 responses



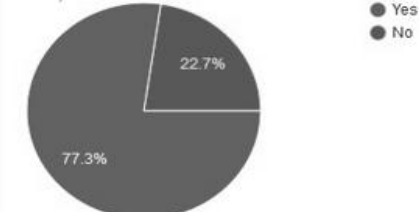
What is the highest level of school completed?

75 responses



If you are selected, would you be willing to participate in an interview about your military experience?

75 responses



Appendix G

Veteran Consent Form

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Institutional Review Board #

Approval Date:

1. Project Title: A Phenomenological Study of Junior Enlisted Marine Corps Veterans' Career Transition and Organizational Attachment: from the Military to Civilian Work Environment
2. Principal Investigator: Kevin Sanford
3. Participant Name: _____
4. Simple Description of Project Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of junior enlisted Marine Corps veterans as they address feelings of attachment and transition out of the military and into the civilian workforce. The study will focus on the veterans' feelings of attachment to the military way of life as they transition to the civilian workforce and how these feelings of attachment impact veterans' behaviors during the transition period. The study will also seek to explain why veterans may expect the culture of the military within the civilian workforce. Additionally, it will posit how veterans' expectations may produce conflict between veterans and civilian employers related to their performance in the civilian workplace. Practical suggestions for overcoming these issues will be discussed from both the individual veteran's standpoint and the organization's.

Appendix G (Continued)

5. Research Procedures: *If you agree to participate in this study, we will ask you to do the following things:*

- a. Meet for a face-to-face interview not to exceed 60 minutes in length.
- b. Sign this consent form prior to the interview.
- c. Be willing to be audio-recorded.

6. Potential Risks: Minimal risk associated. The data collected for this study will not disclose any names of the participants or organizations used. Any sensitive information especially will not be identifiable in order to protect the participants. The information will not be shared with the organization. The dissertation may be published. However, it will not identify any names providing minimal risk.

7. Potential Benefits: New literature will be added to the topic of veterans' career transition and organizational attachment for both researchers and practitioners. This study will provide insight about the intersection of veterans' struggles with both transition and feelings of attachment to the military lifestyle so that the military, veterans, and civilian employers can develop strategies to ease the transitions of the current generation of warriors back to civilian life and foster success in the workplace.

Understanding of Participants:

8. I have been given a chance to ask any questions about this research study. The researcher has answered my questions. I understand any and all possible risks.

9. If I sign this consent form I know it means that:

I am taking part in this study because I want to. I chose to take part in this study after having been told about the study and how it will affect me.

Appendix G (Continued)

I know that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time. If I choose to not take part in the study, then there will be no consequences or actions taken against me.

10. I have been promised that that my name or other identifying information will not be in any reports (presentations, publications) about this study unless I give my permission. The UT Tyler Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the group that ensures that research is done properly and that procedures are in place to protect the safety of research participants) may look at the research documents. This is a part of their monitoring procedure and will be kept confidential.
11. If I have any questions concerning my participation in this project, I will contact the principal researcher:
12. If I have any questions concerning my rights as a research subject, I will contact Dr. Gloria Duke, Chair of the IRB, at (903) 566-7023, gduke@uttyler.edu.

Appendix G (Continued)

CONSENT/PERMISSION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY

I have read and understood this informed consent to participate in research document. I give my permission to take part in this study as it has been explained to me. I give the study researcher permission to register me in this study. I have received a signed copy of this consent form.

Signature of Participant

Date

Witness to Signature

13. I have discussed this project with the participant, using language that is understandable and appropriate. I believe that I have fully informed this participant of the nature of this study and its possible benefits and risks. I believe the participant understood this explanation.

Researcher/Principal Investigator

Date

Biosketch

Kevin Sanford, Ph.D. Candidate (ABD), MBA is a currently enrolled at The University of Texas at Tyler, Soules College of Business, Human Resource Development (HRD): Organizational Development and Change (ODC). Kevin is a United States Marine Corps veteran, serving for many years in the military, as a training instructor, focusing on areas of leadership, motivation, administration, and communication in locations all around the world. Kevin is also a full-time tenure track Assistant Professor in the Business Administration Department at Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) since August of 2015, previously employed in 2014 as an adjunct instructor/lecturer. He has also taught classes in the Computer Science & Information Systems (CSIS) Department. He has taught a number of courses (traditional and online): Introduction to Business, Business Communication, Computer Applications & Office Technologies, Personal Finance & Investments, International Business: International Trade, Principles of Management, Small Business Entrepreneurship Management, Marketing: Principles of Selling, and Principles of Marketing. In addition to serving on the academic senate and numerous other campus & district committees, Kevin has also been the LAVC-Business Club Advisor since 2015. His professional academic activities include attending local and national academic business conferences. He won an award for a best conference paper, published an article in the Business Studies Journal, and presented at, attended, and organized several local academic conferences. Kevin received his Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree with a concentration in Management from Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX and holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Management and Marketing from California State University San Marcos, San Marcos, CA. Kevin's business experience includes ongoing partnerships, marketing, and sales with various internet sales companies and organizations, as an owner, consultant, and investor. His further practitioner experience includes memberships in profit and non-profit organizations, as well as actively participating in charitable fundraising campaigns.